

**STAFF USE OF INTERNET SOCIAL NETWORKS AND OTHER FORMS  
OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Social Networking Websites

The Superintendent and the School Principals will annually remind staff members and orient new staff members concerning the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. The orientation and reminders will give special emphasis to:

- A. Improper digital fraternization with students
  - 1. Teachers may not list current Pennsville students as “friends” on networking sites.
  - 2. Teachers will not give out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
  - 3. Inappropriate contact via electronic communications is prohibited.
- B. Inappropriateness of posting items with sexual content
- C. Inappropriateness of posting items exhibiting or advocating use of drugs and alcohol
- D. Examples of inappropriate behavior from other districts, as behavior to avoid
- E. Monitoring and penalties for improper use of district computers and technology
- F. The possibility of penalties, including dismissal from employment, for failure to exercise good judgment in on-line conduct.

The Superintendent or designees will periodically conduct internet searches to see if teachers have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When inappropriate use of computers and websites is discovered, the Superintendent or designee will review a copy of the inappropriate material and conduct an investigation.

Digital Devices: Voice, Text, Social Networking Sites & Email

School district personnel shall limit digital interaction with students to contact that pertains to legitimate school business. Legitimate school business includes:

- A. Answering academic inquiries regarding homework, other classroom work or assignments;
- B. Scheduling appointments for school related conferences and/or extra help;
- C. Clarifying classroom expectations and/or assignments;
- D. Notifications related to classroom, club or sports schedules, events, trips, assignments; deadlines.

Digital contact with students shall be as brief and direct as possible. When brief contact is not sufficient and/or feasible to resolve the matter, teachers shall schedule face-to-face conferences during regular classroom and extra-help periods to confer with the student.

Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as profane or obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illicit, illegal or unethical activity; or messages:

- A. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
- B. That can be interpreted as provocative, flirtatious or sexual in nature;
- C. That contain confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information

School district personnel shall adhere to the following guidelines when sending messages via internal or external E-mail:

- A. Personnel shall not reveal passwords to others. If a staff member believes that a password has been lost or stolen, or that E-mail has been accessed by someone without authorization, he/she should contact the Help Desk immediately. Windows should not be left open on the screen when the computer is unattended.
- B. Staff shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illegal or unethical activity; or messages:
  - 1. That violate the district's affirmative action policy;
  - 2. That are broadcast to a large group of other personnel without supervisory permission;
  - 3. That contains confidential information to persons not authorized to receive that information.
- C. Personnel shall become familiar with the district's policies and regulation on staff and student access to networked information resources before initiating E-mail use.
- D. Employees learning of any misuse of the E-mail systems shall notify their Principal or the Superintendent or designee immediately.

### Implementation

This policy shall be distributed annually to all staff members.

Adopted: May 13, 2013

### **Legal References:**

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| <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:6-10 | Dismissal and reduction in compensation of persons under tenure in public school system |
| <u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11-1 | General mandatory powers and duties   |

N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4 Power of boards of education to make rules governing  
employment of teacher, etc., employment thereunder

N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)

Hicks v. Pemberton Bd. of Ed., 1975 S.L.D. 332

Quiroli v. Linwood Bd. of Ed., 1974 S.L.D. 1035

Carlstadt Teachers Ass'n v. Carlstadt Bd. of Ed., App. Div., unreported decision  
(docket no. A-1469-80-T4, decided March 26, 1982), 1982 S.L.D. 1448

**Possible**  
**Cross References:**

4117.50	Standards for staff discipline
4119.2	Responsibilities
*4119.21	Conflict of interest
*4119.22	Conduct and Dress
*4119.23	Employee substance abuse
4119.24	Staff/pupil relations
*4138	Nonschool employment
*4138.2	Private tutoring
*6144	Controversial issues

\*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.