DIRECT STUDENT COMMUNICATION
In order to protect both our students and staff, Policy DH (Regulation) outlines the requirements if a staff member needs to communicate directly with a student.

Electronic communication directly with a student is permitted if:
• There is a valid educational purpose; OR
• A family or other appropriate relationship; AND
• The parent has permitted the communication.

Reminders:
• Staff working with students should use a campus-approved communication platform, including their District email.
• Staff should not use their personal email to communicate with students and should refrain from texting with individual students.
• A staff member does not have a right to privacy regarding communication with students or parents.
• Communication must be appropriate, provide a clear benefit to the student, and be within the scope of the employee's professional duties.
• Communication directly with a student must not occur between the hours of 9pm and 6am.

VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF STUDENTS
• A district employee must obtain the written consent of a child's parent before the employee may make or authorize the making of a videotape of a child or record or authorize the recording of a child's voice.
• Recording online sessions: Recording of class sessions in Zoom, etc., do become an education record and extra care is needed. Recordings should not be maintained within the Zoom cloud system or on a laptop/desktop. Recordings are education records and should be maintained as any other recording of a student would be by the teacher (staff Google Drive with appropriate privacy settings) Zoom has FERPA compliance info at: https://zoom.us/docs/doc/FERPA%20Guide.pdf

VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF STAFF
• Before recording, determine if the recording is necessary for continued district operations. It is recommended that unless necessary, video and audio recording should not be used.
• Any recording that an employee makes is subject to the Texas Public Information Act.
• Any recording that an employee makes may be subject to the Texas State Records Retention Schedule. Failure to abide by such laws may be criminal.
• Texas is a single-party consent state meaning that only one party has to consent to recording. That individual does not have to disclose that he/she is recording.
• As always, be mindful that you may be recorded at any time without your knowledge or consent, particularly when using platforms such as Zoom, phone conferences, etc.

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STAFF/SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION

- District is operational despite physical facilities being closed. As such, staff is still expected to be in contact with their supervisor and continue with professional job duties.
- Staff should expect that communication by their supervisor can occur through various means, including via email, phone, TEAMS, Zoom, and other platforms used in communication used by a supervisor.
- Texas Legislation has implemented SB944, which states that any employee or trustee is required to preserve all required records, regardless of the system or device in which it is received. This means that records received on personal cell phones and email are subject to Open Records requests, and must be preserved according to state records retention policies. Non-compliance with SB944 is a felony.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

- Staff are responsible for their public conduct even when they are not acting as District employees.
- Staff are responsible for the content on the staff's personal page, including content added by the staff member, the staff member’s friends, or members of the public who can access the staff member’s page.
- If a staff member’s use of electronic media interferes with the staff’s ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.
- A staff member may not use district resources to update their social network page, may not use the District copyrighted material without consent from the District, and lastly, the employee will continue to be subject to applicable state and federal laws, local policies, administrative regulations, and the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, even when communicating regarding personal and private matters, regardless of whether the employee is using private or public equipment, on or off campus.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

To solve customer service challenges, remember the acronym: L.A.S.T. Listen, Acknowledge, Solve, Thank

- **Listen**: To show that you’re actively listening to your customer with a sense of empathy and commitment to hearing their perspective (parent, student, colleague, etc.), repeat their concern
- **Acknowledge/Apologize**: A sincere “I’m sorry” goes a long way. “I’m sorry this happened. I’m happy to help fix it.”
- **Solve**: Find a solution as best you can. You may not be able to completely solve the customer’s problem right that minute, but moving toward a solution is often enough.
- **Thank**: Thank customers for bringing the problem to your attention and for simply being a customer. “Thank you for letting us know so we can get this corrected.

**Sample Email Dialogue/Response**

- Be polite; messages typed in capital letters are the computer equivalent of shouting and are considered rude.
- Use appropriate language; swearing, vulgarity, ethnic or racial slurs, and any other inflammatory language are prohibited.
- Be considerate when sending e-mail attachments by taking into account whether a file may be too large to be accommodated by the recipient’s technology resources or may be in a format unreadable by the recipient.
- Do not use the District’s technology resources in such a way that would disrupt use for others.