

POLICY GBEE: Internet and Electronic Communications including Social Media

Responsible Office: Human Resources

Internet and Electronic Communications including Social Media

I. PURPOSE

To ensure that appropriate staff maintain professional and ethical relationships while using internet and electronic communications including social media to interact with the Las Cruces Public Schools community.

II. BACKGROUND

- a. The Board of Education acknowledges that internet and electronic communications, including social media, are necessary tools for staff, educators, students, and the LCPS community at large.
- b. The Board of Education is committed to ensuring that these tools are used appropriately, with an educational purpose, and in a manner that promotes professional and ethical relationships.

III. POSITION

A. Staff Electronic Communications with Students

1. All staff are required to maintain appropriate professional and ethical relationships in their conduct with students and shall serve as positive role models for students at all times, including in electronic communications. LCPS encourages healthy relationships between students and staff members that promote student achievement and success.
2. Electronic communications for the purposes of this policy shall mean a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, emails, texts, instant messages, and communications made by means of an Internet website, including social media and other networking websites.
3. Staff members shall establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries while engaging with students via electronic communications, and shall not engage in any

behavior that is prohibited by law, regulation, or this Policy or that creates the appearance of prohibited behavior.

4. Electronic communications between staff and students should be related to teaching, counseling, athletics, extracurricular activities, treatment of a student's physical injury or other medical needs, school administration, or other purposes within the scope of the staff member's job duties, including performing a task specified in his or her position description or contract agreement, a task related to a student's education or to discipline of a student, providing a service or benefit related to the student or student's family, or maintaining the safety and security of the school community.
5. All staff shall be required to maintain professional and ethical relationships with students that are conducive to an effective, safe learning environment. This Policy addresses a range of behaviors that include not only obviously unlawful or improper interactions with students, but also precursor grooming and other boundary-blurring behaviors that have the intention or effect of leading to more egregious misconduct. It is the responsibility of the LCPS staff to maintain a professional relationship with students and their families.
6. This Policy is not intended to interfere with appropriate personal or family relationships between staff and students and their families that exist independently of LCPS, nor to interfere with participation in civic, religious or other outside organizations that include students.
7. The interactions and relationships via electronic communications between staff and students should be based upon mutual respect and trust, an understanding of the appropriate boundaries between staff and students in and outside of the educational setting, and consistency with the educational mission of the schools.

B. Staff Electronic Communications with Staff

1. All LCPS employees shall communicate with professional, courteous behavior when using electronic communications.
2. All LCPS policies and regulations apply to staff electronic communications, including social media when there is a connection to the school district.

C. Reporting

1. Staff members are required to immediately notify their immediate supervisor, human resources or any other appropriate administrator if they become aware of a situation that may constitute a violation of the law or this Policy. This obligation is in addition to

the statutory responsibility to report suspected abuse and neglect under the law as implemented by Policy JLF, "Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting," or its equivalent.

2. Staff members have a responsibility to report to their immediate supervisor, the district's human resources department, or to any other appropriate administrator when they suspect, recognize or observe the development of, or suspicion of the development of non- professional or potentially inappropriate personal relationships with students and/or their families
3. Students and their parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to notify the principal, human resources or any other appropriate administrator if they believe a staff member may be engaging in conduct that violates the appropriate boundaries as specified in this Policy, puts a student at risk or which may violate the law.

IV. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Board of Education policy review process.



Teresa Tenorio
President, Board of Education

November 15, 2022

Date Approved

History:

Legal Reference: NMSA 1978 Section 22-10A-5