

Policy on Social Media

It is the policy of the Stoughton Public School District to maintain appropriate electronic communications between students and staff, teachers or coaches at all times. The District recognizes that there are efficient and appropriate means of communication available to faculty/teachers/coaches who need to contact students. The Superintendent will ensure that the School Principals and Athletic Director annually provide training to faculty, staff, and coaches, in addition to the orientation of new staff members, concerning the importance of maintaining proper, professional decorum in the on-line, digital world as well as in person. Employees must exercise common sense and conduct themselves in ways that do not distract from or disrupt the educational process. This policy prohibits all faculty, staff, coaches, and volunteers from:

- 1) engaging in improper fraternization with students using email and social media sites, or via cell phone, texting or the telephone.
 - a. Faculty, staff and coaches may not list current students as “friends” or its equivalent on social networking sites. Faculty, staff, advisors, and coaches shall not respond to social media invitations from currently enrolled students.
 - b. All electronic contacts with students should be through the district’s computer and telephone system, except in emergency situations.
 - c. All text messages, or its equivalent, sent by district employees or volunteers to student group or team shall be sent to all members, except for messages concerning medical or academic privacy matters, in which case the messages will be copied to the appropriate director or the school principal. Student group advisors or coaches may send text messages, or its equivalent, to designated students or team captains in order to initiate “communication chains”.
 - d. It is appropriate for teachers and/or coaches to send a group mail email alert to notify parents of club or sport cancellations or time changes using an official school email account unless an urgent situation requires the use of a personal email account.
 - e. Faculty, staff, advisors, and coaches are strictly prohibited from giving out their private cell phone or home phone numbers without prior approval of the district.
 - f. Inappropriate contact via e-mail, text, or phone is prohibited.
- 2) posting or sending items containing sexual content
- 3) posting or sending items exhibiting or advocating the use of drugs and alcohol

The Superintendent or designees will ensure that the faculty and staff adhere to this policy and will investigate allegations that faculty, staff or coaches have violated this policy or have posted inappropriate materials on-line. When violations of this policy or the inappropriate use of electronic communication is discovered, the School Principal shall notify the Superintendent and bring the policy violation to the attention of the faculty or staff member. The Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, may consider and apply disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any such discipline will be conducted in accordance with collective bargaining agreements and state and federal law.

Note: For the purpose of this policy, “social media” means any internet based medium created through social interaction, where users primarily produce and contribute to the content. Social media include, but are not limited to, social or professional networking websites, wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, image-sharing websites, and video-sharing websites. Given the rapid pace of technological change it is not possible to identify all types, proprietary or commonly named or identified means of such communication. As such, all online, electronic or computerized means of communication are subject to this policy.

Approved by School Committee – April 9, 2013

