NEW HOPE-SOLEBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Use of electronic methods of communication by District employees is permitted and encouraged where such use is suitable for business purposes and supports the goals and objectives of the District and its business units. Electronic communication is to be used in a manner that is consistent with the District's standards of business conduct and as part of the normal execution of an employee's job responsibility.

It is unacceptable to:

1. Purposefully send or receive or attempt to send or receive electronic communications unrelated to business activities.
2. Purposefully send or receive or attempt to send or receive any material that is obscene or defamatory or that may be perceived as annoying, harassing or intimidating to another person.
3. Send or attempt to send a communication anonymously or in any manner so as to disguise the identity of the actual sender.
4. Represent personal opinions as those of the District.
5. Upload, download or otherwise transmit commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to parties outside of the District, or the District itself.
6. Reveal or publicize confidential or proprietary information which includes, but is not limited to financial information, databases and the information contained therein, computer network access codes, and business relationships.
7. Disclose personally identifiable information related to a student, except in strict accordance with Board Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the regulations promulgated there under.
8. Use any District computer for personal business such as on-line shopping, affinity group participation, etc.
9. Use any instant messaging system on any District computer or through the District's network.
10. Use social networking sites on any District computer or through the District's network unless for a clear educational purpose.
11. Communicate with students or parents of students with whom the employee has a professional relationship through social networking sites outside of the workplace.
12. Use of any District computer to facilitate or participate in blogging, unless used for a clear educational purpose and otherwise consistent with law and Board policy.
13. Use any District computer to participate in or facilitate chat rooms unless used for a clear educational purpose and otherwise consistent with law and Board policy.
14. Use personal email accounts, telephone text messaging and social networking sites to communicate with students.
15. Use personal email accounts, telephone text messaging and social networking sites to communicate with parents of a student that the employee teaches regarding matters related to the student's education. All such communications are to be sent through District channels.
16. Downloading of files, games, music or video, unless, for a clear educational purpose, and always in accordance with copyright and Fair Use Guidelines.
17. Sharing district passwords with or allowing password to be used by, anyone else.

Electronic Communication Best Practices

These standards apply to employees regardless of whether they are using the District's facilities.

1. All electronic communication should follow the same formality as a business letter. It should be treated as a formal document with proper business standards being followed. Spelling, grammar and punctuation should be checked.
2. The District encourages users to:
    a. Use file compression techniques or alternative methods to send large documents.
    b. Create folders for received and sent messages.
    c. Use folders to save important information but make it a regular habit to review all folders and delete the old or out-dated material.
    d. Delete unimportant messages as you read them.
    e. Archive effectively - use folders and delete any messages you no longer need
3. Employees are advised never write anything in an electronic communication that the employee would not want to become public knowledge.
4. Employees need to realize that by participating in social networking sites, blogging or creating other publications on line outside of the workplace, such postings can constitute and can be linked to unprofessional behavior. Employees also need to be aware that even information and images posted at restricted access levels may be accessed by and/or disseminated to others, including the District. Employees may not post materials that would disclose educational records or confidential information of students or allow such information to be linked or related to posted information.
5. Keep electronic communications brief and use meaningful subject lines.
6. Re-read messages before sending to check for clarity and to ensure the appropriateness of its contents.
7. Use CC and BCC appropriately: only CC in people that really need to receive the email.
8. Never reply to spam.