

Sec. 4.26.1. ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Electronic media includes all forms of social media, such as text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing web sites, editorial comments posted on the Internet, and social network sites. Electronic media also includes all forms of telecommunication, such as land lines, cell phones, and web-based applications.

Sec. 4.26.2. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS

In this policy, “electronic communication” means any communication facilitated by the use of any electronic device, including a telephone, cellular telephone, computer, computer network, personal data assistant, or pager. The term includes e-mails, text messages, instant messages, and any communications made through an Internet website, including a social media website or a social networking website.

Sec. 4.26.2.1. General Guidelines

Life School employees may engage in electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in Life School for academic purposes only. All other employees are prohibited from communicating electronically with a student who is enrolled in Life School unless express authorization is provided by the Superintendent or designee. An employee is not subject to these provisions to the extent he or she has a social or family relationship with a student.

The Superintendent or designee shall issue guidelines under which a certified or licensed employee—or any other employee designated in writing by the Superintendent or designee—may engage in electronic communications with students who are currently enrolled in Life School about matters within the scope of the employee’s professional responsibilities. All other employees are prohibited from using electronic media to communicate directly with students who are currently enrolled in Life School, unless exempted under the guidelines issued by the Superintendent or designee.

The guidelines developed by the Superintendent or designee shall address:

1. Exceptions for family and social relationships;
2. The circumstances under which employees may use text messaging to communicate with students; and
3. Other matters deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee.

Life School employees have no expectation of privacy in electronic communications with students. Employees shall comply with Life School’s requirements for record retention and destruction to the extent those requirements apply to electronic communications with students.

Sec. 4.26.2.2. Inappropriate Communications

Life School employees are prohibited from using electronic communications in a manner that constitutes prohibited harassment or abuse of a Life School student; adversely affects a student's learning, mental health, or safety; includes threats of violence against a student; reveals confidential information about a student; or constitutes an inappropriate communication with a student.

Factors that may be considered in assessing whether the communication is inappropriate include, but are not limited to:

- The nature, purpose, timing, and amount of the communication;
- The subject matter of the communication;
- Whether the communication was made openly or the educator attempted to conceal the communication;
- Whether the communication could be reasonably interpreted as soliciting sexual contact or a romantic relationship ;
- Whether the communication was sexually explicit; and
- Whether the communication involved discussion(s) of the physical or sexual attractiveness or the sexual history, activities, preferences, or fantasies of either the educator or the student.

Sec. 4.26.3. PERSONAL USE

Employees shall be held to the same professional standards in their public use of electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of electronic media violates state or federal law or Life School policy, or interferes with the employee's ability to effectively perform his or her job duties, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.