

Sec. 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. 2. SCHOOL-OWNED SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

a) *General Guidelines*

Life School may provide employees with access to social media applications or accounts. Only public information is permitted to be posted by Life School employees on school-owned social media websites. If communication that takes place on a school-owned social media websites involves or requires private information, communication will be redirected through other appropriate channels.

Life School retains ownership of all school-owned social media applications or accounts used for school business.

b) *Content of Social Media Posts*

All content posted by employees to school-owned social media accounts is subject to monitoring. Employees are strictly prohibited from using school-owned social media accounts to post material(s) that:

- Advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual;
- Are obscene or that appeal to the prurient interest;
- Consist of personal attacks or insulting statements directed toward an individual;
- Contain offensive terms that target protected classes;
- Contains information that reasonably could compromise public safety;
- Incites or promotes violence or illegal activities;
- Include personal identifying information or sensitive personal information, as defined by Chapter 521 of the Texas Business and Commerce Code;
- Is of a repetitive or “spamming” nature (the same comment posted multiple times)
- Is threatening, harassing or discriminatory; or
- Promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates.

c) *Password Security*

Employees granted access to school-owned social media accounts must maintain the security of any password used to access the account. In the event an employee changes a password to a school-

owned social media account, the employee must provide the Director of Marketing or designee with the updated password or similar login credentials used to access the account.

d) *Policy Violations*

Employees who violate Life School’s standards for use of school-owned social media accounts are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Sec. 3. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS

a) *Introduction*

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.

b) *Electronic Communications with Students*

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.

i. *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.

ii. *No Expectation of Privacy*

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.

c) *Incident Notification*

A Life School employee shall report to the Principal any incident in which a student engages in improper communications with the employee. Such reports should include a summary of the student’s communication, as well as the time, date, and method of communication.

d) *Disclosing Personal Telephone Number or E-mail Address*

A Life School employee may elect not to disclose to students the employee’s personal telephone number or e-mail address.

Sec. 4. PERSONAL USE

Employees shall be held to the same professional standards in their public use of social media and/or electronic media as they are for any other public conduct. If an employee's use of social media and/or 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.