

ETHICAL USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The Todd County School District recognizes that educators may choose to communicate with other staff, students and parents/guardians via means of electronic communications from time to time, including times and situations when they are not face-to-face in the school setting. Staff members must keep in mind that all communication with students, regardless of when or where it occurs, and regardless what means is used to communicate, must not impair the professional nature of the staff member's relationship with the student.

Ethical behavior requires that District staff members show consideration and respect whenever using electronic communication devices. When interacting with other staff members, students, and/or parents/guardians, all Todd County School District staff members shall:

1. not initiate electronic communication with a student at a time or upon a subject matter that would be likely to impair the staff member's professional relationship with the student and/or his/her parent/guardian, or that would be likely to cause a substantial disruption of the student's educational opportunities in the District;
2. not include in electronic communication between themselves and other staff, students and/or parents/guardians, comments or content that would not be acceptable in a face-to-face communication;
3. not disclose, use, or disseminate unauthorized personal information of another person;
4. distinguish between personal social networking sites and professional social networking sites. Staff are encouraged not to invite or accept current District students, except for the staff person's relatives, into any personal social networking sites; and
5. evaluate all information for its accuracy, reliability, and authority.

Disciplinary action may be taken against any staff member whose communication causes a substantial disruption in the education environment or that substantially interferes with another's rights. In addition to any appropriate disciplinary action, a referral to law enforcement may be made whenever it appears that a communication contains a threat, or when it appears that a communication contains evidence of stalking, harassment, or any other crime. In

an appropriate situation, the Superintendent may also file a complaint with the Professional Teachers Practices and Standards Commission or any other teacher certification authority.

LEGAL REF: SDCL 13-8-39, 13-43-6.1, 13-43-28

CROSS REFS: GCQF – Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of Professional Staff
GCQD – Discipline, Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff

ADOPTED: January 25, 2010

REVIEWED: August 24, 2015