

Staff-Student Electronic Communications

All electronic communications between an employee of the SSD and a student shall be strictly governed by this policy.

- I. Definitions
 - A. *Electronic communications* is defined as any and all electronic communications including, but not limited to, phone communication (conversations, voicemail, video phone, etc.) text-based communication (computers, Email, etc.) and all Internet-based communication opportunities including, but not limited to, social networks and chat rooms.
 - B. *Employee* is defined as any full-time or part-time employee of SSD or a volunteer at the school.
 - C. *Student* is defined as any student currently enrolled at SSD.
- II. Electronic communication by an employee to a student is permitted for educational services provided to the student and shall be by means provided by or otherwise made available by SSD for this purpose; all other electronic communication between employees and students through all such means for other purposes is prohibited. Use of these means is permitted for communication with a student's immediate family member if the communication with an immediate family member is specifically authorized by SSD policy.
- III. Any occurrence of electronic communication made by an employee to a student or that is received by an employee from a student using a means other than one provided by or made available by SSD shall be reported by the employee to the SSD Superintendent. Other staff members who become aware of such communications are also required to report the communications.
 - A. The report of a prohibited electronic communication must be made in writing, signed and dated and received by the SSD Superintendent within 24 hours of receipt of such a communication.
 - B. This written report may be accomplished by email or in a paper document.
- IV. Records of any such reported communication shall be maintained by the SSD Superintendent for one year. This information is deemed confidential pursuant to the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) and shall remain confidential.
- V. All employees must comply with this policy and failure to comply may result in disciplinary action; failure to comply may constitute willful neglect of duty. Possible consequences for a violation of this policy are: employee reprimand, to be made a permanent part of the employee's personnel file; suspension without pay; demotion; or termination

- VI. Timelines for reporting and investigating an alleged failure by an employee to comply with this policy and for concluding such an investigation and resolving the allegation are as follows:
 - A. Any knowledge or suspicion of an alleged failure of an employee to comply with this policy must be reported to the SSD Superintendent in a written, signed and dated statement within 24 hours of receipt of such a communication.
 - B. The SSD Superintendent will undertake an investigation of any such allegation and conclude the investigation within twenty (20) business days. The SSD Superintendent shall produce a written report of the investigation on or before the twentieth business day.
 - C. If the report concludes that no evidence exists to support the allegation, the SSD Superintendent shall close the file and maintain the records for one year.
 - D. If the report concludes that evidence supports the allegation that an employee failed to comply with this policy, the SSD Superintendent shall immediately proceed with an action against the employee, as set out herein. This information is deemed confidential pursuant to FERPA and shall remain confidential.

- VII. Any failure of an employee to comply with this policy may also be a violation of state or federal law and must be reported to the appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Louisiana Office of Community Services, the appropriate local police or sheriff, and/or the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

- VIII. SSD employees shall be notified of this policy in the following manner:
 - A. All employees who were employed on December 15, 2009 was given a copy of this policy and required to sign and date an acknowledgement of receipt, to be kept in the employee's personnel file.
 - B. The Human Resources Office will give a copy of this policy to each new employee at the time of hiring. The employee shall be required to sign and date an acknowledgement of receipt that will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

- IX. Parents and/or other persons responsible for a student's school attendance will be informed of this policy in the following manner:
 - A. The parents/guardians of every student who was enrolled in SSD on December 15, 2009 was given a copy of this policy.
 - B. Parents/guardians of new students will be given a copy of this policy, and they must sign an acknowledgement of receipt, which will be maintained in the student's cumulative folder.
 - C. The policy given to parents/guardians will include a form to request that the student not be contacted through electronic communication by any SSD employee unless the purpose for such communication is directly related to the student's educational services and is sent to and received by more than one student at the school.

REF: Act 214, Regular Session of 2009