Plano ISD Guidelines

Use of Electronic Media and Personal Internet Sites by District Employees

School district employees throughout Texas have encountered an increasing number of complaints against them alleging inappropriate relationships and/or the appearance of impropriety as the result of the use of text messaging and personal cell phones with students. In the interest of avoiding improper contact, any appearance of impropriety, and maintaining the proper professional relationship between educators and students, Plano ISD directs all District staff members to exercise caution in utilizing text messaging, personal cell phones, and personal Internet (including social networking/media) sites.

All District employees are required to perform their duties in accordance with state and federal law, District Policy, and ethical standards. This includes the Code of Ethics which is codified in District Policy DH (EXHIBIT). Due to the fact that the District stands "in loco parentis" (in the place of parents) in its role with students, all District staff, in fulfilling their responsibilities, are expected to maintain professional boundaries in their relationships and communication with students. For example, staff members are <u>highly discouraged</u> from "friending" students on Internet site(s), including personal and/or social electronic media site(s). District employees are <u>prohibited</u> from posting personally identifiable information of students, including photos, without written consent from the students' parent or guardian.

Plano ISD recognizes and respects an employee's right to freedom of speech. See Plano ISD Board of Trustees' ("Board") Policy DG (LEGAL). However, when that right impinges on, and/or compromises, an employee's ability to effectively perform his/her duties as a Plano ISD employee, the District must take appropriate action. Specifically, the District will investigate and, when necessary, evaluate disciplinary action when information posted by an employee on Internet site(s), including personal and/or social media site(s), results in conduct including, but not limited to: conduct that compromises the dignity of the profession; conduct that does not respect and obey the law; conduct that does not demonstrate integrity; conduct that does not exemplify honesty; conduct that constitutes moral turpitude; or any other conduct in violation of Plano ISD Board Policies. See Plano ISD Board Policies DH (LEGAL), DH (LOCAL), and DH (EXHIBIT). Further, in some instances, accessing and/or modifying such sites utilizing Plano ISD equipment may also result in a violation of the District's Acceptable Use Policy. See Plano ISD Board Policies CQ (LEGAL), CQ (LOCAL), CQ (EXHIBIT), and CQ (REGULATION).

The District recognizes that sometimes urgent situations arise such that it may be necessary to communicate with students outside of normal channels. Text messaging and related forms of contact should only be used for communications within the scope of the staff member's position with the District and within the bounds of professional conduct mandated by the student/educator relationship. Text messaging, telephone, and other electronic communication should not be used as a substitute for personal supervision of students and/or communication with students and parents. Professional judgment should always be exercised in terms of the content and timing of such communications.

District employees are <u>prohibited</u> from posting pictures of, or likenesses of, Plano ISD intellectual property (including the district's logo) on personal or social electronic media sites. District employees are also <u>prohibited</u> from posting any information, pictures or otherwise, on personal or social electronic media sites that result in a violation of District Policy, including but not limited to, the District's Standards of Conduct for all employees. Finally, District employees are prohibited from accessing sites in violation of the District's Acceptable Use Policy. Please be aware that the District will hold employees responsible for any and all objectionable information on personal or social electronic media sites that is within the control of an employee.

Employees who create and maintain Plano ISD-related websites or social media accounts must provide the web address and login information to the campus principal. Campus principals who create and maintain Plano ISD-related websites or social media accounts must provide the web address and login information to the Executive Director of Elementary Campus Services or Executive Director of Secondary Campus Services.

<u>Personal</u> Websites and Social Media	<u>PISD-Associated</u> Websites and Social Media
• For personal/non-PISD use	• Exclusively for PISD-related content (no personal content)
• May NOT use Plano ISD logo/other intellectual property	• May use Plano ISD name, logo, and other intellectual property as appropriate
• May NOT post identifying student information and/or photos	• May post identifying student information and/or photos **only with written parental consent** (for most students, student work, videos, artwork, and pictures are covered by the annual release signed by parents at the beginning of the year; if that release was not signed, or there is any doubt whether the item is covered, obtain a new release)
• Employees are discouraged from "friending" or connecting with students and parents	• The opportunity to "friend", connect, or follow should be accessible to all students or members of the public (depending on intended audience)
• May not post any information, pictures or otherwise, that result in a violation of District Policy; otherwise, not subject to regulation by the District	• May not post any information, pictures or otherwise, that result in a violation of District Policy; may be subject to additional regulation by District supervisor(s)
• Not subject to oversight by the District	• Must provide login information to campus principal/District supervisor

It is each employee's responsibility to manage his/her behavior at all times, including when using a variety of communication and information-sharing tools.

The purpose of these guidelines is to protect both students and staff.
Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in this regard.