

IPSD 204 – Digital Tools / Social Networking - Staff Expectations

(Revised 7.3.17)

Indian Prairie School District 204 recognizes that today's students are deeply engaged in electronic forms of communication for their daily interactions with friends, family and their larger social networks. As educators, we too have turned to email, websites, blogs, text messaging, and use of social media websites to communicate with others. Whereas these forms of communications are dynamic, mobile, and quickly reach their audience through technologies that have become an integral part of our online lives, they may, in many circumstances, not meet District 204's professional standards for communicating with students, staff, parents, and other members of the public.

The expectations outlined in this document are designed for the purpose of:

- Protecting the Students, Staff, and District 204.
- Raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communications tools when communicating with students, parents, and other members of the community.
- Raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with students, parents, and community.

Does the communication **pass the TAPE Test**?

Is this communication **Transparent**? – All electronic communication between District employees and students to the targeted audience should be transparent, with the knowledge that the communication is not inherently private, and could be viewed by others. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility, and accountability with regard to all communications.

Is this communication **Accessible**? – All electronic communication between District employees and students should be considered a matter of record, part of the District archives, and/or may be accessible by others, or subject to FOIA requests, etc.

Is this communication **Professional**? – All electronic communication from District employees and students to the targeted audience should be written or communicated in a professional manner representing Indian Prairie School District 204. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards, integrity, and excellence that are expected from every District 204 employee. When communicating, be mindful to choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and professional in nature.

Is the communication **Ethical**? – All electronic communication originating from District employees and students to their intended audience should be free from harassing or intimidating (bullying and/or cyber bullying) content and comply with existing board of education policies, including but not limited to:

- 5:20 - Workplace Harassment Prohibited
- 5:120 - Ethics and Conduct
- 5:125 - Personal Technology and Social Media; Usage and Conduct
- 6:235 - Access to Electronic Networks
- 7:20 - Harassment of Students Prohibited

All IPSD 204 policies are available online at: <http://board.ipspd.org/Pages/Policies.aspx>

204 Guidelines

Online media can be viewed as an extension of our classroom and administrative environments when used for conducting District business or activities. Conduct that is deemed inappropriate within the classroom, school or any District environment should also be deemed inappropriate online or when using any of these technologies for District communications.

District employees should always consider the age appropriateness of the social media or network environments being considered for use within our educational system. Some social media environments are not recommended for students under the age of thirteen. Others require parental permission for minors under thirteen. District employees are required to always abide by the age appropriateness of the tools utilized as well as the specific approval procedures required by these guidelines.

Types of Communications Methods

E-School Plus - Teachers and administrators will be able to communicate directly with students and parents regarding information related to real-time grades, attendance, comments, assignments, and much more directly from the grade book/student information system.

District 204 Email - Use of District email is an appropriate way to communicate directly with students and parents. District email provides the staff member with a record of the communication. For this reason, only the district- provided email system (your name @ipsd.org - address) should be used.

Please refer to the District 204 Email Standards for best practice guidelines in its use (see staff website). Be aware that list-serves/email lists on the district network are covered by the email standards. Staff members experiencing difficulty receiving emails from students and parents via their District email account should report these difficulties to the Support Team Helpdesk.

School Websites/ IPSD G Suite - The use of these District-provided tools is strongly encouraged. Their accessibility is ubiquitous and their content is highly transparent. With these tools, teachers can provide some of the same types of communication that commercial social media websites provide while also providing access to your curriculum beyond your classroom walls. They also allow for effective online learning by supporting online discussions, secure chat rooms, online delivery of assessments, and the sharing of documents, images and other media, all in a secure, password protected environment.

Outside Applications - For those individuals who find that the District provided tools do not meet age level appropriateness and/or curricular needs, and would like to pursue other commercial social media tools, the guidelines below must be adhered to while keeping with the TAPE test. ***(Transparent/Accessible/Professional/Ethical)***

- Before using a digital resource with students a teacher must visit the Chrome Webstore-Student Accessibility Spreadsheet (<https://goo.gl/nia1WM>) to see what is currently available.
- If the resource is not listed, the teacher must complete the Chrome Webstore-Approval Process Form (<https://goo.gl/yyRLRt>).
(For future reference, the Student Accessibility Spreadsheet and the Approval Process Form can both be found on the IPSD Staff Website under the Instructional Technology Tab.)
- Upon completion of the Chrome Webstore-Approval Process Form, the teacher will be contacted with next steps.
- This process does not apply to resources that are district adopted (Ex. WeVideo, Newsela, Read and Write for Google Chrome, etc.) and core products within the Google Apps for Education Suite (Drive, Docs, Slides, Forms, Sheets).
- NOTE: Before using digital learning tools that do not fall into the above categories, consideration should be taken with regards the concerns outlined in this document and referenced documentation along with gaining administrator approval.
- Through the registration process, students are permitted to use Internet based tools unless a parent/guardian excludes the child from Internet permissions. However, with the use of any external online application which allow for posting of comments and/or electronic communication with others, teachers must also communicate with parents via a permission slip providing rationale, curricular connections, and expectations for acceptable use.
- Teachers will be responsible for maintaining their class or educational online communication tools.
- Teachers' online communication pages must reflect positively upon District 204 and the school.
- Non-school related personal applications must not be linked in any way to the District 204 school web pages/online applications or to those used with students.
- All applications should reflect instructional goals; this means that all staff and student online applications must clearly demonstrate the connections to educational projects, activities or goals.

- Student names and pictures:
 - 1) When using photos of students, the online application will not clearly depict the faces ("head shots") or group close-ups of those persons, unless written permission has been granted by the students' parent(s) or guardian(s).
 - 2) Student names will not be published on the internet unless written permission has been granted by the students' parent(s) or guardian(s).

Parents grant permissions for web publication of student photos and/or student names through the registration process. This data is available through the administration and communication/news liaisons in each building. The staff member planning to facilitate the publication is responsible for checking the permissions before publications are made.

Text Messaging – As the use of cell phones and text messages has increased as a form of communication, texting can be an effective form of communication assuming sound, professional judgment is exercised. A teacher/coach/sponsor may use texting for immediate and time-sensitive group communication with students/team members. He/she must be transparent about such use, informing parents at the beginning of the school year or season that texting will be used as a mode of group communication.

If one-to-one adult to student texting is used, it must only be in emergency situations, where other communication methods are not feasible. In these cases, the staff member should also include at least one other responsible staff member (co-coach, athletic director, building administrator) in the text communication.

Non-District Email Accounts – District 204 employees should never use personal email accounts to communicate with students, parents and community regarding school matters.

Online Games and Related Activities – While popularity in online gaming and recreational websites allow for this type of competition while online, staff members should refrain from engaging in this type of activity with students of District 204.

Twitter – Twitter accounts can be used for district-related communication under the following conditions:

- 1) Administrative approval by the building principal or district-level supervisor must be given to a staff member before opening a Twitter account to be used for school/district communication.
- 2) All messages must meet the conditions (T.A.P.E) test as listed above.
- 3) Personal Twitter accounts should not be used for school/district-related communication. The staff member must set up a separate Twitter account if intending to use Twitter for work-related communication.
- 4) Staff members should adhere to guidelines regarding publishing/posting student pictures and names.

Personal Technology/Personal Websites/Social Networking Tools:

Use personal technology and social media for personal purposes only during non-work times or hours. Any duty-free use must occur during times and places that the use will not interfere with job duties or otherwise be disruptive to the school environment or its operation.

Posting in Public Places/Social Media:

As a professional, you should be wary of posting items in public places that could be embarrassing or disruptive to the classroom environment in which you work. It is expected that if you post information or have information about you accessible on sites/platforms including but not limited to Twitter, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Facebook, personal blogs, dating services, or Google, that it would be professional and responsible. It is not our intent to monitor these sites; however, we have an obligation to investigate if an issue is brought to our attention.

Guidelines for educators using personal websites/social networking tools:

- Do not accept district students as friends on personal social networking sites. Decline any student-initiated friend requests.
- Remember that people classified as “friends” have the ability to download and share your information with others.
- Post only what you want the world to see. Imagine your students, their parents, and your administrator visiting your online page. What would they want to see when visiting your site?
 - Do not discuss confidential information relating to students, parents, or co-workers.
- Visit your profile’s security and privacy settings. Consider having privacy settings to “only friends” so as not to open up personal content to a large group of unknown people.
- Weigh whether a particular posting puts your effectiveness as an educator at risk.
- Exercise caution in regards to exaggeration, colorful language, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.

If a staff member learns of information, on a social networking site that falls under the mandatory reporting guidelines, they must report it as required by law.

Disclaimer Required

When a District employee publishes content that is intended to communicate District business to any website outside of a District-sponsored site, they should use the following disclaimer: “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent Indian Prairie School District 204 policy, strategy, or opinion.” The disclaimer in itself does not exempt employees from personal and professional responsibility.

Respect all applicable copyright, fair use, and disclosure laws. Do not use Indian Prairie School District 204 or school logos, or other district branding on personal social media sites.