

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

Sevier County School System ("System") employees may only participate in appropriate communications with students. The arrival of new technology brings with it a greater risk that employees will participate in inappropriate communications with students.

System employees can and should encourage appropriate student communication via in-person conversations, telephone calls and school-related messages. To avoid inappropriate communications or the appearance thereof, however, text messaging between System employees and students should remain school-related, including but not limited to communications regarding academic, disciplinary or athletic issues. Except in cases of emergency, employees receiving text messages of a personal nature from students shall only respond by asking the students to stop. If the unsolicited personal messaging persists despite requests to stop, employees shall inform their school administrators.

As noted earlier, the System encourages employees to communicate with students via school-related messages. Online messages between an employee and a student must (1) involve an employee's school-provided e-mail account and (2) remain school-related, including but not limited to communications regarding academic, disciplinary or athletic issues. Except in cases of emergency, employees receiving unsolicited e-mails or other personal messages from students shall only respond by asking the students to stop. If the unsolicited personal messages persist despite requests to stop, employees shall inform their school administrators.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION.

Distributed August 18, 2009 by Dr. Jack A. Parton, Director of Schools