

Policy

_____	Monitored
_____	Mandated
_____	Other Reasons

**BOARD MEMBER USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS
AND OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Social Networking

Board members will periodically review the importance of maintaining proper decorum in the online, digital world as well as in person. This review will give special emphasis to Board Members’ use of all social media.

Code of Ethics

Use of social media by school Board Members shall be consistent with the New Jersey Code of Ethics for School Board Members, N.J.S.A. 18A:12-24.1.

- A. Board Members will refrain from inappropriate conduct in making public statements on social networking sites, and will refrain from any disparagement of fellow Board Members and all district staff on a personal, professional, political, social, racial or religious basis. Board Members shall not send messages that contain material that may be defined by a reasonable person as profane or obscene; messages that are racist, sexist or promote illicit, illegal or unethical activity.
- B. Board Members will recognize that authority rests with the Board of Education and will make no personal promises on social media sites, or any form of electronic communication, nor take any private action which may compromise the Board.

Open Public Meetings Act

Board Members are prohibited from utilizing electronic communication that violate or seek to circumvent the Open Public Meetings Act.

Maintaining Confidentiality

Board Members will exercise care not to divulge confidential information about students, school employees, or Board business on social media sites. Board Members who have access to student information are prohibited from disclosing that information. All records related to students maintained by the district / school constitute confidential student records.

Board Members should not expect that their online conversations will remain private. Extreme care shall be taken not to disclose confidential information related to students, employees, or Board business while interacting online.

**WEST ORANGE BOARD OF EDUCATION
EMPLOYEE HEALTH (Continued)**

FILE CODE: 4112.40/4212.40

Open Public Records Act

If electronic communication includes discussion of official Board business, Board Members will be aware that the contents of that discussion will likely constitute a public record and the requirements under the public records law will apply. If the Board Member posts comments on official business, that posting may create a public record, and the Board Member will be responsible to meet the record retention requirements of the Open Public Records Act (OPRA).

School Board Members who use social networking sites shall take precautions to keep communications about official Board business separate from personal communications.

NJSBA Review/Update: January, 2017

Adopted: February 13, 2017

Key Words

Employee Conduct, Cell Phones, Text Messaging, E-Mail

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties
N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 et seq School Ethics Act
N.J.S.A. 18A:54-20 Powers of board (county vocational schools)
N.J.A.C. 6A:28-1.1 eq seq School Ethics Commission

Possible

Cross References: *1250 Visitors
*9000 Role of the Board
*9010 Role of the Member
*9020 Public statements
*9271 Code of Ethics

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual