

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

9200.1 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Introduction

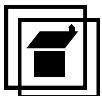
In response to the dynamically changing world of communication, it is necessary to develop guidelines to ensure effective communication with our parents, students and the Hopewell Valley Regional School District community.

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District recognizes the value of timely and accurate communication with our parents, students and community. Additionally, electronic methods (email, texting, Twitter, etc.) have become valuable communication tools that are widely used across our society. It is important that these tools are used effectively and appropriately for communication in and between the school district and its employees and the parents, students and community we serve.

In an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of communication, District staff members are provided with District email accounts to communicate both within the organization and with the broader community.

1. Guidelines for General Communications

- a. Communications, either verbal or written, to parents or staff members should be consistent with professional practices for correspondence. This includes grammar, format and salutation.
- b. Please keep all contacts professional. Jokes, amusing stories, chain letters, or commercial solicitations are inappropriate.
- c. Written communication (email, texting, and/or letters) must not be used to discuss contentious, emotional or highly confidential issues. These issues should be dealt with face-to-face or via telephone call. There may be times when email is an appropriate method to follow-up on a previous conversation; however, this format should be agreed upon between the sending and receiving parties. Sensitivity and judgment should always be used.



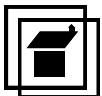
POLICY

HOPEWELL VALLEY REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Community
9200.1/Page 2 of 6

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

- d. All emails that reside on the District servers may not be confidential. Email messages may be requested by the public under the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) and may, unless they are exempt under the law, be open to public inspection.
 - e. Emails should be short and directional in nature and only include facts.
 - f. Email parents or staff members only when they have agreed that email is an appropriate form of communication.
 - g. Only communicate with parents using the email addresses listed in Infinite Campus.
 - h. Care should be given when using student names. Refer to students by first name, initials, or your son/daughter depending on the content. Do not discuss non-related students.
 - i. The School District maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication. It is expected that district staff members will refrain from using personal email accounts and personal phones during the school day. The District reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to District business, the District's educational mission, and/or messages that include foul language or deemed abusive towards the recipients.
 - j. Tag lines with personal statements at the end of emails are to be avoided.
 - k. Every attempt will be made to contact parents within two school days.
2. General Guidelines for Email/Texting /Website Posts
- a. Use District accounts ONLY for school-related purposes.



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

- b. Consider everything you send by email, text or post on a website to be public. Emails and texts can be traced, forwarded to people you didn't intend to send them to, copied, printed, and shared.
 - c. Never say anything on email or text that you wouldn't say in public.
 - d. Keep messages simple and direct.
 - e. Font: The print font should be easy to read.
 - f. Be polite. Using ALL CAPS equates to yelling.
 - g. Always include a subject in the subject bar.
 - h. Subjects should be short and direct.
 - i. Use complete words (thanks in advance), not acronyms (TIA).
 - j. Do not share your email account or password, ever.
 - k. If using a signature, keep it simple and clear for school use. For example:
Joe Smith
Hopewell Elementary School
jsmith@hvrtd.org

3. Examples of Appropriate Uses

- a. Email or text communication should be used for general information such as; class activities, curriculum, assignments, tests, deadlines and special events.
- b. To arrange for a meeting or a telephone call regarding a student issue, include a general description of the issue. For example, "I would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your daughter's attendance."
 - c. Follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed
 - d. Getting assignments or handouts from email conferences, teachers, or peers



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

- e. Communicating with other schools for collaborative projects with teacher approval
 - f. Communicating with experts for school-related work with teacher approval
 - g. Emailing schoolwork to and from home
4. Examples of Inappropriate Uses
- a. Casual discussion - "What's up?"
 - b. Emailing friends to make plans or discuss social activities
 - c. Emailing people you do not know
 - d. Sending offensive messages or pictures
 - e. Distressing, insulting or attacking others, directly (sent to that person) or indirectly (sent to a friend to talk about that person)
 - f. Logging on to someone else's email using their login name and/or password
 - g. Using inappropriate language
 - h. Any discussion related to other students
 - i. Personal information about other students
 - j. Specifics about a sensitive student issue which was not initiated by the parent or has not previously been discussed with the parent. (e.g. 'I am concerned that your daughter failed the last three tests and was not at school again today.')
 - k. Any discussion related to other staff
 - l. Any sensitive student information that would normally be discussed face-to-face or by telephone. (e.g. I am concerned that your daughter may have a learning disability.)

Please note: These guidelines do not apply to all situations (i.e. certain communications with special education staff are regulated by the NJAC Title 6A, Chapter 14).



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Hopewell Valley Regional School District School District Email Guidelines for Parents
(To be posted in the schools and on the District website)

The goal of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District is to have open communication with community residents. It is understood, however, that messages are sometimes misinterpreted. In an effort to address communications in the District and ensure that parties communicating have a mutual understanding of expectations, the following guidelines have been developed.

Please be aware that although email may be a fast and convenient way for you to send messages, this may not be the case for many of our teachers. Some teachers read their email messages in the morning before school, some read them at the end of the day, and some read them during the school day. Many teachers prefer to use the telephone to speak directly to parents. Every attempt will be made to contact parents within two school days.

For these reasons, please remember if you choose to send an email message to a member of our professional staff, you may not get an immediate reply. In fact you may not

receive an email reply at all, since each staff member will determine how best to contact you: by email, telephone, or to schedule a conference.

When using Email:

- a. Only authorized email addresses will be used by Hopewell Valley Regional School District School staff to communicate with parents. To avoid confusion, parents should send email messages from an email account listed in Infinite Campus.
 - b. Please send only non-vital messages by this medium. For example, do not use email to inform a teacher that your child is not to go home on the bus. A teacher may not have time to read your message in a timely fashion. Instead use the telephone to be sure your message is received and clearly understood.
 - c. Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioral issues are best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a conference



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

- with your child's teacher. An email message on these matters is not appropriate unless it is an agreed upon follow-up between the parties communicating.
- d. Please remember that email is not necessarily confidential. Confidential information should be conveyed by telephone or personal contact.
 - e. Please identify the nature of your communication in the subject line of your email message and, if appropriate, the name or initials of your child.
 - f. For all medical or health concerns, please contact your child's school nurse by telephone.
 - g. Mass email to the District staff must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools before sending the email.
 - h. If the teacher is unable to contact the parent after repeated attempts via electronic communication, a certified letter may be used to contact the parent.

The School District maintains email accounts for teachers to facilitate parent/teacher communication and internal staff communication. The District reserves the right to block or filter email messages to staff that are not directly related to District business, the

District's educational mission and/or use foul language or deemed abusive towards the recipients.

Remember that email is a quick way to send a message, but it is not necessarily the best way to get a quick reply.

New - Reviewed by Communications Committee: 19 July 2010. First Reading: 16 August 2010, Second reading and adoption: 13 September 2010

