

COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY WITH STUDENTS

The Nashua School District 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 such as Twitter, Facebook, and others to communicate with similar groups. 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 must meet the high public and professional standards we have set for ourselves.

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

1. Protecting the students, staff, and the District
2. Raising awareness of acceptable ways to use electronic communication tools when communicating with students; and
3. Raising awareness of the positive and negative outcomes that may result in using these tools with students.

The following is a set of expectations that all members of the Nashua School District professional community are expected to adhere to when communicating with students electronically through social media, email, etc.

Does the communication pass the TAP Test?

Electronic communication with students should always be **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible, and **P**rofessional as defined below:

1. **The communication is transparent.** ALL electronic communication between staff and students should be transparent. As a public school district, we are expected to maintain openness, visibility and accountability with regard to all communications. Whenever possible, District email or other District sponsored communication vehicle should be used.
2. **The communication is accessible.** ALL electronic communication between staff and students is part of the District archives, and/or may be accessible by others. Staff should not have an expectation of privacy with respect to these communications.
3. **The communication is professional.** ALL electronic communication from staff to student should be written as a professional representing the District. This includes word choices, tone, grammar and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a District professional. Always choose words that are courteous, conscientious, and generally businesslike in manner.

If your communication meets all three of the criteria above, then it is very likely that the methods of communicating with students that you are choosing are very appropriate; moreover, encouraged.

Refer to Nashua School District Policy GBEA, *Professional Ethics*.

Staff is cautioned about the inadvertent release of personal or confidential student information under FERPA. Refer to Policies 3340, 3440.1, ECA, and IMBA for additional information.

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