

# Palmyra Area School District

SECTION: PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES

TITLE: STAFF – STUDENT  
COMMUNICATION

ADOPTED: January 10, 2013

REVISED:

417.1 STAFF - STUDENT COMMUNICATION	
1. Purpose	<p><b>The Board adopts this policy</b> to establish procedures for staff and student interaction and communication in and out of the school setting, in person, and via correspondence including but not limited to telephone, e-mail, texting, tweeting, and the Internet.</p>
2. Authority	<p>School district employees must adhere to the following guidelines, which are consistent with the school’s workplace standards on harassment, student relationships, conduct, professional communication, and confidentiality:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An employee must not make statements that would violate any of the district’s policies, including its policies concerning discrimination or harassment.</li><li>2. The employee must uphold the district’s value of respect for the individual and avoid making defamatory statements about the school district or any member of the school community.</li><li>3. An employee may not disclose any confidential information of the district or confidential information obtained during the course of his/her employment, about any individuals or organizations, including students and/or their families.</li></ol> <p>School district employees are prohibited from communicating with students in a manner that is unprofessional and thereby inappropriate. Examples of unprofessional communication <b>shall</b> include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Employees communicating with students as if employees and students were peers, such as writing personal letters or e-mails and texting students.</li></ol>

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2. Calling students on cell phones or allowing students to make personal calls to them unrelated to homework, class work, and school district-sponsored or sanctioned student activities.
3. Sending lewd or inappropriate pictures, depictions, or graphics to students.
4. Discussing or revealing to students information about employees' private lives that is inappropriate in regard to the staff-student relationship, or inviting students to do the same (other than professional counseling by a school counselor).
5. Engaging in sexualized dialogue, whether in person, by phone, via the Internet, or in writing.

Employees engaging in inappropriate communication with students will be investigated by school officials and, if warranted, will be disciplined, up to and including termination. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the school district may notify the proper authorities, including the Pennsylvania Department of Education, local police, and child welfare agencies for further investigation.

In addition, if/when the school district becomes aware that employees have posted information on Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, or similar social networking web sites that include inappropriate personal information such as but not limited to lewd photographs, sexually explicit messages, or use of substances prohibited by law, their cases will be investigated by school district officials and, if warranted, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending upon the severity of the offense.

The Superintendent or designee reserves the right to periodically conduct Internet searches to determine if employees have posted inappropriate materials online. If inappropriate use of computers and web sites is discovered, the Superintendent's designee will download the offensive material and promptly bring that misconduct to the attention of the Superintendent for review and possible disciplinary action.

### **References:**

**School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 510, 514**

**Professional Educator Discipline Act – 24 P.S. Sec. 2070.1a et seq.**

**Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators – 22 PA Code Sec. 235.1 et seq.**