



## **Student Communication**

**Oklahoma House Bill 3958** went into effect July 1, 2024, and requires school personnel engaging in electronic or digital communication with an individual student to include the student's parent or guardian in the electronic or digital communication, unless the communication is on a school-approved platform and related to school and academics.

**DBCS employees are prohibited from communicating directly with students as we serve students in grades PK-3.** In accordance with this law, the Deborah Brown Community School Board of Education will approve **HB** 3958, and the current list of district-approved digital platforms which employees may use to communicate with students is limited to the following:

1. District Email
2. School Messenger
3. Board-approved Virtual Curriculum
4. Official District Social Media Platforms (This does NOT include individual employee's personal or professional social media accounts. The only approved social platforms are those official accounts for school sites and student groups, and those accounts **MUST** be managed by more than one school employee.)

The above platforms have been approved based on the following criteria:

1. Auditable, meaning all communication is retained and district officials can monitor or review information at any time.
2. Allowable within the district network and firewalls and does not create security issues.
3. Compatible with other district applications.
4. No additional cost to the district.

## HB Student Communication



### Purpose

This policy addresses all forms of group or one-on-one electronic and digital communication (including, but not limited to, email, texting, instant messages, direct messages, social media messages, messages sent through software applications, etc.) between any District employee and students. This policy outlines the District's expectations regarding school personnel's direct digital and electronic communication with students by requiring any such direct communication with students to include the student's parent or guardian.

### School Personnel

School personnel includes all staff or any other persons employed full-time or part-time by the District.

### Policy

Pursuant to Oklahoma law, school personnel engaging in electronic or digital communication with a student must include the student's parent or guardian in the communication, unless the communication is on a school-approved platform and is related to school and academic matters. In the case of an emergency where other parties cannot be immediately included on digital or electronic communications, the student's parent or guardian shall be subsequently notified of the communication as soon as possible.

Prior to the start of the school year, the District shall compile a list of approved digital platforms for communications between District personnel and students. Such platforms will automatically include in the messaging parents or guardians who opt in. The list will be posted on the District website and distributed to District employees. These sanctioned platforms are the only appropriate method for District personnel to communicate directly with students. Outside these platforms, school personnel must affirmatively include a parent or guardian in the text message, email or other electronic communication. Failure to do so is a violation of the law and this policy.

### Violations

School personnel reported to be engaging in unauthorized communications with students through digital or electronic platforms shall be placed on administrative leave while the District investigates the incident and notifies the Board of Education. If the investigation results in a finding that no misconduct occurred, the school personnel shall be reinstated, and the incident shall be noted in the employee's personnel file. If the investigation finds misconduct occurred, the employee shall be disciplined according to the District's policy, up to and including termination of employment. Additionally, the incident shall be reported to law enforcement.

### Reporting

Students who receive communication from school personnel in violation of this policy are encouraged to report it to any District employee. School personnel who

## HB Student Communication



suspect, recognize, or encounter digital or electronic communications between a student or staff member that does not include a parent or guardian, or otherwise violates this policy, must report it immediately to their supervisor, the Superintendent, or other District official.

**Reference: 70 O.S. § 6-401.**

**Adopted: September 19, 2024**