



Policy Number: 2140

Dated: 04/28/2016

POLICY INFORMATION / ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION / SOCIAL NETWORKING

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees of American Leadership Academy recognize that websites, Social Media and other Electronic Communications when used appropriately by School Employees, enables the school, students and parents to communicate and share information in a timely and relevant manner across numerous platforms. ALA recognizes its obligation to ensure Student privacy, Internet safety, and professional boundaries and prevent against potential legal and other consequences. ALA Employees must adhere to the highest standards of professionalism in all their Information, Electronic Communications and Social Networking. Because Electronic Communication continues to evolve, the guidelines outlined herein will apply to new technologies as they emerge.

Where this policy limits or restricts certain forms of communication between Employees and Students, the limitations and restrictions do not apply to communications between Employees and Students if such communications are for educational, health, safety, emergency, or other legitimate reasons.

DEFINITIONS

- 1. Educator:** means a teacher, counselor, administrator, librarian, or other person required to hold a license as per Utah Code Ann., Section 53A-6-103.
- 2. Electronic Communication:** means any communication, whether written, audio, visual, or otherwise, transmitted via any electronic device. Electronic Communications include, but are not limited to, phone calls, text messages, email messages, instant messaging, chats, blogs, or the uploading, downloading, posting, or creating of any material via mobile device, the Internet, or any local network.
- 3. Employee:** means any adult, who is not also a K-12 Student, employed by ALA.
- 4. Social Media:** means any web-based or mobile technologies that enable Electronic Communication as an interactive dialogue or allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.
- 5. Social Networking:** means establishing, maintaining, posting to, or otherwise participating in an electronic community on websites, blogs, or through accounts on Social Media sites.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. An Educator who creates a school-related or social media website must have proper approval from their school administrator and comply with all school policies.
2. Educators must comply with any and all applicable state and federal laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and may not post Student photos or other personally identifiable information unless specifically authorized under the provisions of FERPA or obtaining prior written consent from the parent/legal guardian.
3. Educators must have a specific educational purpose or need to use social media.
4. Educators are expected to monitor the content on their school-related site(s), including posts by Students. Educators shall ensure that Student posts which violate laws or school policies are removed immediately and appropriate action taken.
5. Educators and Students interacting through a school-related or social media website shall maintain the same professional level of communication, behavior, and appearance as though they were in the classroom. Educators must not engage in dialogue or behavior with Students that is “peer-like,” but must maintain a formal teacher-student relationship.
6. Employees may not intentionally transmit or receive material in violation of law or school policy. This includes, but is not limited to, pornographic, indecent or sexually suggestive materials, weapons, controlled substances or alcohol, or incendiary devices. Content containing profanity, obscenity, vulgarity, defamation, bullying, harassing, false or inaccurate information, threatening or abusive content or any other types of inappropriate material. An Employee may not be in possession of or use pornographic material on school property. Users are prohibited from posting or sending content that contains threats or is hatefully or racially, ethically or otherwise objectionable.
7. Employees may not communicate privately with, nor allow private communications from, Students via any personal website.
8. Social Media may be used within the School as a tool for educational and effective communication. When used it should promote the School in a positive manner, and share School news and information in a timely and relevant fashion.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in the digital world and online postings and conversations are not private. All Electronic Communications between Employees and Students must be school-related and should, where possible, be done through the Employee’s official school medium. The following guidelines are recommended for Electronic Communications between Students and Employees and are intended to protect against potential legal and other consequences.

1. All email from Employees to Students should be sent from an Employee’s official School email address. Employees should not share their personal email addresses with Students.
2. Text messaging should only be used for school-related information.

3. Employees should avoid making phone calls to a Student's cell phone.
4. All Employee-Student chats or instant messages, including video chatting, should be done through an official school email account, Social Media page, website, or other official medium.
5. Images or pictures should portray Employees and the School in a professional manner.
6. Employees who create or maintain personal Social Networking pages shall ensure that photos, videos, text, and all other content on their page will not disrupt school activities. Pages and profiles must allow the Employee to maintain a professional, respectful association with Students, colleagues, and the community, and must not undermine the reputation of the school or its administrators.
7. Employees should not be friends with Students using personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, "Goggle+" or any other social networking site.

Employees shall not initiate or continue to discuss any of the following issues with Students via Electronic Communication without obtaining appropriate parental consent or having an appropriate and legitimate educational, health, safety, emergency, or other reason.

1. Political affiliations, philosophies or beliefs of the Student or Student's family.
2. Mental or psychological problems of the Student or Student's family.
3. Sex behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
5. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the Student or parents.
6. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

Such discussions between Employees and Students via Electronic Communication on any of the above issues without appropriate parental/legal guardian consent or having a legitimate reason constitutes an inappropriate boundary invasion that may be in violation of the Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment and the Utah Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

VIOLATION

Any Employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to, suspension, termination, verbal or written warnings or reprimands.