



# TECHNOLOGY

*Suggestions for  
Appropriate Use*



[arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk)



**C**omputers, the Internet, email, text messages, cell phones, and tablets have changed our lives. Most school employees use technology to improve communication and instruction, but a few school employees have lost their jobs because they inappropriately used technology.

Whenever you face a dilemma about whether using technology is appropriate, analyze the situation by changing it to an “old-fashioned” method of communication. For example, if you are deciding whether to send a text message to a student, ask yourself if it would be appropriate to send a similar letter to the student.

**Review your district’s Internet and technology use policy.**

Find out if your district limits use of school computers, personal email mail, and cell phones by employees. The policy is usually GBEF. Some districts require employees to sign an acknowledgement stating that they understand and agree to comply with technology use policies.

**Think before you send.**

Technology is incredibly rapid. If you would not say something directly to a person, then do not send it to that person in an email or text. Take a moment to review any emails or text messages before you send them. Always check to see if you clicked on “reply” or “reply all.” Check the message to determine whether it should be sent to a personal email address rather than a school email address.

**Do not use the school computer to communicate or view anything that you would not want your boss or your (grand)mother to see.**

Most deleted emails and computer information can be recovered by a computer technician. School district Internet policies usually prohibit profanity, ethnic slurs, sexual content and photos, threats, and harassment. Public schools expect teachers to be role models for students and to conduct themselves with decorum, decency, and integrity. You should never bring an adult-themed magazine to school, and similarly you should never look at that kind of Website at school or on school computers.

**Do not use a school computer or school email addresses to influence an election.**

Do not use a school computer to send or forward communications asking others to vote for or against a candidate or asking for money or volunteer time to help a candidate. Use your home computer and email addresses for these purposes.

**Keep communications professional.**

Use a school email address to communicate school information to students and parents. Avoid sarcasm and name-calling. Be cautious about giving students your personal telephone (landline or cell) numbers, email addresses, and Web pages. Remember that you are the student’s teacher, coach, or club sponsor. You can be friendly, but you are not the student’s friend or peer. Think about whether a parent could be alarmed by the content or frequency of messages to a student. It is best not to give a student your cell number.



**Avoid sending or forwarding messages to a huge list of people at school.**

If you would not comment out loud at a staff meeting, do not email the comment to everyone on campus. Avoid sending jokes or cartoons to a wide distribution list. You may think a joke is funny; someone else may think it is offensive.

**Be cautious about letting others use your school computer.**

Log off your school computer before you let a student or anyone else use it. You may want to erase your browsing history.

**Report unsolicited, inappropriate emails to the technology coordinator or your supervisor.**

If you inadvertently view an inappropriate site, close the window immediately and report the incident to your supervisor.

**Be aware that students can misuse technology at school.**

Monitor how students are using school computers. Watch them like a hawk!

**Keep personal information private.**

If you use an online social networking site, such as Facebook or Instagram, set your profile as private so that only your close friends and family can view it. Be aware that a visitor to your site can follow the links to your friends' sites and might find information about you that you would rather keep private. Do not post your address, telephone number, work site, birth date, social security number, or other personal information online.

**Remove inappropriate materials from your Websites or blogs.**

Delete suggestive photographs, sexual innuendos, and anything else that can be used against you. Administrators, students and parents may view material on these sites, and that material may compromise your effectiveness in the classroom or at your worksite.

**Be wary about writing online about your work.**

Do not discuss your work or supervisor even if you are using false names. An impulsive, sarcastic rant may lead to discipline or dismissal. Above all else, do not discuss your students online. You might inadvertently disclose student information that is protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

**Google your name.**

This search may locate outdated websites that may be problematic as well as any fake profiles someone may have created about you.

**Never engage with students on social media other than on school-sanctioned platforms for school matters.**



## A Final Note

For more information and assistance, contact your local association, [arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk), or your AEA Organizational Consultant.

**[arizonaaea.org/helpdesk](http://arizonaaea.org/helpdesk)**  
**(877) 828-1983**



This booklet is a general guide for AEA members and is not intended to provide complete information or legal advice on specific problems.



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