
AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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COMPUTER AND E-MAIL

The Board of Education recognizes the advantages to its workforce afforded by the district's computers, its electronic mail system and other data generation and communication technologies. It is also aware of the increasing frequency with which these technologies are used to accomplish the district's mission. Finally, the Board also recognizes that from time to time it will be necessary to gain access to district computers and to the electronic mail system used by its employees.

Accordingly, the Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to adopt such procedures relating to computers, electronic mail and other communication and data generation technologies used in the performance of the work of the district as are believed by the Superintendent to be necessary. Such procedures should aid the efficient operation of the district, while at the same time protecting the rights of employees.

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 24-72-204.5

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity

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In accordance with the policy adopted by the Board of Education relating to computers, the electronic mail system and other data generation and communication technologies used in the performance of district work, the Superintendent of Schools hereby issues the following regulation relating to the use of such technologies.

General Guidelines for Use of E-Mail and Computer Systems

1. Employees shall not send anonymous messages or messages which appear to be from someone other than the sender.
2. Employees should take care not to disclose their passwords to anyone. However, employees may be required by their supervisor to provide read access to the employees' e-mail and/or electronic appointments through the proxy or forwarding functions of the e-mail software.
3. Employees shall not use unauthorized codes, passwords or other means to gain access to other's voice mailboxes, computers or e-mail.
4. No District-owned resources shall be used to send or compose messages which would tend to create a hostile work environment under applicable law relating to age, sex, race, religion or disability discrimination, or which would violate district policies concerning sexual harassment (policy GBAA) and ethnic intimidation (policy AC) or which would otherwise be disruptive to the workplace.
5. District-owned computer resources generally may not be used in any way for commercial ventures (including sale of an employee's personal property). Any exceptions must use the process for obtaining approval outlined under policy KHA/KHB, Advertising in the School District and Revenue Enhancements.
6. District e-mail may be used to support charitable ventures consistent with policy KHA/KHB.
7. District-owned resources shall not be used to access or download material which is sexually explicit, obscene, lewd or vulgar.

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District-owned equipment, including computers and the electronic mail system, is the property of the School District and is to be used by employees primarily for the business purposes of the District. Occasional personal use may be acceptable when it does not interfere with the employee's fulfillment of her/his duties or the duties of her/his co-workers. The privilege of occasional use for personal matters may be withdrawn by a supervisor when it is abused or where it interferes with the work of any employee. Inappropriate use of district computers or network systems, including use which is intended to damage the system or make it less efficient (for example, by introduction of a virus), may subject the user to discipline. Inappropriate communications (including messages that may constitute intimidating, hostile or offensive material on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, national origin or disability) may subject an employee to the same sort of disciplinary action as would verbal comments or non-electronic written comments or a similar character.

Broadcast E-mail Messages

As noted, the District's electronic mail system is to be used by employees primarily for the business purposes of the District. An excess of e-mail messages which did not relate directly to an employee's work would diminish productivity by detracting employee attention from work tasks and could unduly burden system capacity. For these reasons, "broadcast" e-mail messages sent by district employees are prohibited except as outlined below. (A "broadcast" e-mail message is one which is sent by the originator of the message to more than five persons.)

- ***Broadcast e-mail messages which are directly related to the sender's assigned work*** for the District may be sent without advance approval. Examples of such messages would include the following:
 - Messages from District administration relating to school District business;
 - Notices regarding classes sponsored or offered by the District (e.g., adult education courses; staff development courses);
 - Messages relating to the Aurora Education Foundation (AEF), including messages on behalf of those who provide (via monetary contribution or otherwise) a substantial direct benefit to the AEF or the District;

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- Messages relating to employee safety;
 - Messages relating to the functioning of the District communications network or major computer applications; and
 - Notices regarding school activities in which APS students will participate as APS students (rather than as private citizens) and which are open to the public such as a school play or orchestra performance.
- ***Broadcast e-mails messages which are not directly related to the sender's assigned work*** for the District may not be sent without advance approval. Advance approval may be obtained as follows:
 - **In a building or at an individual site** -- if the broadcast e-mail message will be sent only to those within the sender's site or building, it must be approved in advance by principal/site manager or their designee.
 - **Outside a building** -- if a broadcast e-mail message is to be distributed beyond a single building or site, it must be approved in advance by the Director of Communication Services.
 - **Decision making** -- in making decisions about whether to allow broadcast e-mail messages not directly related to the employee's work for the District job tasks, the overall criteria to be used are whether the message (or a number of similar messages which might follow if the one at issue were to be approved) would unduly take employees' attention from their work, would tend to impair the usefulness of the District's e-mail system, or would otherwise cause a disruption to or decrease the efficiency of the District's operations or that of any of its employees. The decision maker shall not be required to allow any broadcast messages, which do not relate directly to the sender's work for the District.

Examples of broadcast e-mail messages, which would generally not be approved:

- advertising goods for sale;
- other messages relating to commercial enterprises;
- attempts to raise money for a charitable or other cause supported by an individual employee;
- attempts to find roommates;

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- attempts to find a home for a pet; or
- messages relating to elections, views on social issues, politics, etc.

Examples of broadcast e-mail messages which may, depending on the specific circumstances, be approved:

- messages related to a school or District event which has been approved by school or district administration such as announcements about a blood drive sponsored by school;
- attempts to locate equipment for school use (e.g., finding a desk or a bulletin board for a classroom) or other messages which would benefit a school; or
- issues relating to utilizing the e-mail system efficiently, such as where two system users have a similar last name and wish to issue a caution about taking care to use the correct name.

Right of the District to Review Information Stored or Transmitted on E-Mail and Computer Systems

For a number of reasons, computer-generated information, including e-mail, should not be considered to be entirely private. These reasons include:

1. while computer passwords are encouraged, both for data files and in some cases for e-mail, they can generally be defeated by a knowledgeable intruder;
2. even when a file or computer message is deleted, it is still sometimes possible to recreate the message;
3. systems operators and some members of the District's Information Technology Department can override network passwords and thereby gain access to all information stored on district computers;
4. unauthorized intruders may be able to gain access to the District's computer network; and

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5. employees should take care not to disclose their passwords to anyone. However, employees may be required by their supervisor to provide read access to the employees' e-mail and/or electronic appointments through the proxy or forwarding functions of the e-mail software.

In addition, messages sent on e-mail systems may be public records open to public inspection under Colorado law relating to public records. In light of these considerations, *employees using the e-mail and computer systems should not expect that the data they produce or the messages they send, receive or store will remain private.*

Under the circumstances outlined below, district administration reserves the right to review any data found on district-owned computers and any e-mail messages sent over the e-mail system, including e-mail or data sent to or received from on-line sources and including information that may be unrelated to district business. Employees who wish to communicate, compose or store personal, confidential or private information should not use District e-mail or computers to do so because privacy cannot be ensured and should not be expected.

Circumstances Under Which Data may be Reviewed

Except for: 1) maintenance by the Information Technology Department after notification to appropriate supervisors; 2) entry related to an investigation of employee misconduct; or 3) entry for the purpose of accomplishing district work in a timely and efficient manner, no monitoring of employee communications over District e-mail or intrusion into computers without the user's consent may be undertaken. Monitoring or intrusion relating to an employee investigation shall not take place except at the direction of either the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, or the Chief Personnel Officer, Human Resources (or, where necessary, under unusual circumstances, the President of the Board of Education). The Information Technology Department is authorized to cooperate in the investigation of employee wrongdoing to the extent necessary to facilitate such an investigation.

Dissemination of Policy

This regulation and the policy shall be available to the employees of the District on the district intranet Web site. In addition, it is recommended that the following message be posted on District e-mail systems at least annually:

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"The e-mail and computer systems of the Aurora Public Schools constitute a system which is to be used by district employees to accomplish the business purposes of the School District. Anyone using this system should be aware that computer files and e-mail messages are not necessarily confidential. Both retrieval authorized by district policy and unauthorized retrieval may occur. In addition, e-mail messages may constitute public records under the Colorado Open Records Act. Consequently, employees should utilize some other method of creating, storing and conveying confidential, private or personal information they wish to remain confidential. By using this system, users agree to abide by Policy EGAEA and Regulation EGAEA-R and confirm that they have read and understand the terms of that policy."

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 24-72-204.5