

WEILENMANN SCHOOL OF DISCOVERY

Communication Policy

Purpose and Philosophy

The Board of Directors of the Weilenmann School of Discovery has established this policy in order to foster the highest standards of professionalism in communicating with parents, students, staff, and the larger community about programs, events, curriculum, objectives, performance, safety, and other matters related to the school. In providing guidelines to support appropriate management of the distribution or display of non-school information or materials, this policy also seeks to ensure an educational environment that is conducive to learning by minimizing intrusions on instructional time. This policy aligns with Utah's Student Privacy and Data Protection laws, found in Utah Code §53E-9-3 and Utah Admin. Code R277-487, which protect student data within Utah's educational institutions and ensure the confidentiality and security of student information.

Definitions

Distribution: means the distribution of material or dissemination of information via hard copies or electronic communication through the school's electronic communications network, or by display or behavior that communicates information.

Material and Substantial Disruption: means any communication and/or behavior that by its timing, place, or type significantly interferes with school functions, classroom instruction, or the creation of a safe and appropriate educational or workplace environment for students and staff. Such disruption may include demonstrations, destruction of property, injury to students or other persons, shouting or boisterous conduct, or any other communication or behavior that distracts students from instruction or prevents school personnel from performing their educational responsibilities.

Non-School Groups Permitted to Distribute or Display Materials: means the following non-school agencies and organizations are permitted by law and granted permission by the Executive Director to distribute or display non-school materials on school property:

- Local, state, and federal government agencies and departments;
- Non-profit entities offering educational, recreational, cultural, or character development activities or programs to school-aged children;
- Commercial or tax-exempt entities that have partnerships with the school;
- Educational institutions that have partnerships with the school;

- Institutions of higher education.

Non-School Material: means any written information that is not a school-sponsored or curriculum-related material.

Obscene: means any speech or work that a “reasonable” individual, applying contemporary community standards (as opposed to “national standards”), would find, taken as a whole, appeals to prurient interest; or that depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and that, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value; and obscene or obscenity as defined in Utah Code §32B-1-504.

Partner or Partnership: means an educational or community organization that works collaboratively with the school to support academic achievement, safety, or curricular objectives and whose efforts target specific departments or learning communities. The school must directly and measurably benefit from the partnership.

School-Related Group: An organization formed by the school in order to support the school in an area of recognized need.

School-Sponsored or Curriculum-Related Materials: Materials published by the school according to its internal communication procedures for distribution to the school community, such as school calendars, menus, school newsletters, school website, etc; materials approved by school officials and related to activities or events that are officially sponsored by the school, such as announcements for field trips, school concerts; or materials that are directly related to instruction.

Standards for Approval of Materials

The Executive Director must approve all materials distributed or displayed at the school. The Board of Directors strictly prohibits the distribution or display of any material containing the following or that may be described as:

- Obscenity or obscene materials;
- Libelous statements, personal attacks, or abusive language;
- Defamatory or discriminatory language, such as language based on the following: real or perceived race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, socioeconomic status, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, or sexual orientation; physical, mental, developmental, or sensory disability; creed; political belief; age; linguistic or language differences; height, weight, marital status, or parental status;
- Causing or clearly threatening to cause a material and substantial disruption of a school activity;
- Encouraging the commission of an unlawful act or the violation of a school policy or procedure;

- Inappropriate in its consideration of the age of the intended recipients;
- Containing information that is inaccurate, misleading, or false;
- Advertising any product or service not lawfully permitted to minors.

Regulation of Communication

The Board of Directors authorizes the Executive Director to develop regulations and procedures governing the submission and approval process for any communication distributed by whatever means at school. This authority includes the following:

- The decision on whether to allow any specific distribution or display;
- Verification of the status or nature of the communication;
- The periods and frequency of distribution of materials;
- The process for screening and editing materials;
- The procedures for delivering materials to students, staff, and the school community;
- Any bundling requirements for communication; and,
- The development of a system to determine whether materials should be displayed, distributed, or announced.

In accordance with the guidelines and standards of this policy, the Administration has the authority to address other issues related to communication that may arise.

Media and Public Relations

All external public relations efforts are managed by the Executive Director and authorized staff members, thus safeguarding the privacy of students, teachers and staff, and the school community as well as the integrity of the school's public image. All visiting media personnel **must** receive approval for a visit, must sign in at the Front Office, and must be accompanied on campus visits by authorized school personnel.

- The Executive Director or the director's designee may communicate with the media in order to publicize good news, events, activities, and awards.
- The Executive Director or the director's designee may serve as the school's spokesperson or as a liaison between the school and the Utah State Board of Education, the State Charter School Board, the media, other educational institutions, and the larger community.
- The Executive Director and authorized staff members shall develop communications plans, training, marketing, fundraising campaigns, and other such communication, including written, oral, and digital material, in

order to distribute key messages, to build support for the school's educational programs and activities, to strengthen community relations, to support enrollment, and to promote community involvement.

Privacy

In compliance with Utah's Student Privacy and Data Protection laws, found in Utah Code §53E-9-3 and Utah Admin. Code R277-487, and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, and which protect student data and ensure the confidentiality and security of student information, the school has established guidelines regarding personal information, photographs, and the identification of individuals in photographs for internal and external communication programs. These guidelines are intended to protect the privacy and security of students and of all school community members. The privacy guidelines of this policy govern the following communication programs:

- Internal and external community communication, including as yearbooks, class videos, teacher/classroom pages, school directories, and similar publications;
- Internal and external community communication, such as the school newsletter, the annual report, and any communications related to specific events;
- External or public relations or media, such as advertising, information on the website, an online photo gallery, social media, summer programs, etc.

Personal information, such as student or family addresses or grades, is carefully guarded by the school and only utilized by authorized staff members or volunteers with limited access on a need-to-know basis.

FERPA

In compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and contingent on the school's notification of Directory Information, photographs of students are used in internal and external communication unless a parent specifically requests exclusion.

Fundraising

The school reserves the right to utilize information to contact parents of students enrolled at the school for specific school fundraising efforts.

Social Media

The school will not be held responsible for material (photos, video, audio) placed without its knowledge or permission online on personal websites, social media sites, or other external media. The school regularly monitors its own social media and will remove any material in violation of law, this policy, the school's professional standards.

The school requires its teachers and staff, and *strongly* encourages parents and other stakeholders, to adhere to the following guidelines related to social media communication:

- Respect the privacy of others; do not post any information or photos obtained at the school or a school activity of another parent's child unless specific permission is given.
- Provide NO IDENTIFICATION of any online posting.
- Be mindful of any and all potential copyright issues (for example, the use of videotaped performances that may be copyrighted).
- In keeping with the school's values, the use of social media, both private and public, is expected to be respectful at all times.

Socializing Between Staff and Students

- The school does not allow socializing between staff and students on social media sites until after students have graduated from high school.
- Teachers and staff should communicate with students only through school email about school and curricular matters and never through personal email.
- Teachers and staff should never individually text students unless the communication is part of a student's IEP, 504 Plan, or similar, as approved by the administration and parents.
- In any text group for athletics, events, activities, etc., more than one adult should be in the texting group; and when the event, season, or activity has concluded, the texting group should be dissolved by the adult administrators of the account.
- School employees are expected to communicate in a manner that always respects and never exploits the power differential inherent in the relationship between students and teachers.

Visitors

The school has many visitors during the course of the school year, and students from other schools occasionally participate in the school's events and activities. Photography of these events will be used both internally and externally with

appropriate permissions.

Crisis Communication and Management

The Board of Directors reserves the right to develop and refine procedures for communicating during crisis situations and/or emergencies through all appropriate communication vehicles including letters, email, the school's website, phone calls, texting, etc., and to delegate the responsibility for communications to the Executive Director. The Board of Directors also reserves the right to provide communication to the media should the school experience an incident, a lock-down, or other such crises or emergencies that are of a public nature.

Administrative Communications to Staff

The Administration is solely responsible for the content and manner of communications to its staff.

Additional Policy Provisions

The Board of Directors delegates authority to the Executive Director to give or deny access to school property or systems for the purpose of displaying or communicating material or information. This policy strictly prohibits unrestricted access to school property or systems by organizations, individuals, or groups other than the school for the purpose of displaying or communicating material or information.

Reviewed: August 2025