

Acalanes Union High School District Educational Services

Staff Advisement for Communicating with the Public

- Effective communication within the educational community provides great benefits to district staff, parents, and students. The District believes that each person should be treated with dignity and respect in their interactions within the school community and communication should follow the tenets established in [Board Policy 1313 Civility](#).
- Staff members should utilize the communication format (phone, email, Canvas, letters/notes) of greatest efficiency, and effectiveness. Course information handouts distributed at the start of the school should note the preferred form of communication.
- Student progress and daily assignments will be communicated using Canvas. Grades will be updated at the conclusion of each grade-reporting period (Progress Report, Quarter, and Semester) and may be updated more frequently at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Daily assignments will be communicated using Canvas to provide families the opportunity to support their student from home.
- Every staff member should understand the strengths and weaknesses of his/her communication format of choice.
- Communication is most effective when it is meaningful and timely.
- By thoughtfully composing communication documents, multiple exchanges with a recipient may be unnecessary.
- While timeliness may vary by the urgency to resolve an issue, generally a reasonable professional practice is to respond to an inquiry within two workdays.
- It is recommended that communications be well crafted and not composed haphazardly in order to avoid a questioning of professional standards by the recipient.
- Always be aware that not all people accept emails and instant messages as a free form means of expression in which spelling and grammar are assumed to be of diminished value. For many people, your communication may be the only contact they have with you.
- If you are uncertain as to whether an email or letter is appropriate in relation to a specific situation, share the communication with another professional who has not been involved in the issue. Never send any form of communication when emotionally distraught or angry.
- Do not communicate with individuals who have no authorization to receive information about a student or employee. Check with a school administrator when you are uncertain about the appropriateness of a request.
- If you do not want your communication shared with another person, clearly state this in your document. Always communicate with the belief that the message may be shared.
- Social media sites have grown in use by parents, educators, and students, and are a useful tool in learning environment if properly utilized. However, the use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. Refer to the [Staff Use of Social Media Advisement](#) for guidance.

Acalanes Union High School District Administrative Services

Staff Advisement - Communication Guidelines

This advisement was generated as a result of many collaborative discussions between the Acalanes Education Association (AEA) and the Acalanes Union High School District (District) Negotiating Teams. This Advisement is intended to be a common sense approach that will not interrupt or supersede our collective responsibility to report and respond to any matter brought to our attention.

We recognize that positive and open communication is at the heart of effective learning, and is a goal that should be embraced by all stakeholders in the educational process. We agree that direct two-way communication is key. To that end, we are committed to maintaining direct, timely, and respectful communication. Two-way communication with those qualities will foster open and positive relationships.

Direct communication acknowledges that people should know who is sending the message and if the message is about the person, to hear that message directly from the person before the information is shared with anyone else.

Timely communication acknowledges that people should hear the message as soon as reasonably possible.

Respectful communication honors the worth of the individual and his/her value to the community.

Direct, timely, and respectful communication is best achieved when:

- Adults model communication strategies that students are expected to use.
- Anyone initiating a conversation goes directly to the person involved to discuss the issue one-on-one.
- Anyone who is approached with information regarding another person redirects the person or persons to the party concerned as appropriate.
- Communication is intentionally constructive, and values each individual and his/her viewpoint.
- People communicate candidly with each other.
- People communicate politely with each other.
- Everyone in the community both utilizes and encourages this process.

We value maintaining open and direct lines of communication among all stakeholders employed by the AUHSD. To facilitate positive two-way communication all stakeholders should read and understand the principles and strategies described within this advisement. Whenever questions exist or support is needed in the area of communication, stakeholders are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the District and/or AEA leadership.