

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy #906: MASS COMMUNICATION & SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to School District administrators and employees regarding the use of mass communication tools, such as the public address, e-mail, and mass digital messaging systems.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The School Board recognizes the importance of communication with students, staff and families in building a relationship of trust and support for schools and the District. While personal communication with individuals is best, the Board also recognizes the efficiency of mass communication tools in getting important messages to various audiences. However, the Board is sensitive to the potential for overuse and the intrusive nature of some communication tools. Since students, staff and families represent a captive audience, any school or district-wide announcements should be limited to school business and activities closely related to the interests of the school or District.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Announcements** are defined as all oral and written communications given to students, staff or families of students (e.g., public address, video monitors, e-mail or phone messaging, other verbal announcements, bulletins, handbills, and posters).
- B. **School related announcements** may include those of civic groups with which a school or school group is working in partnership for sponsoring activities of interest to all the youth in the community and/or projects for humanitarian causes of a statewide or national scope, such as the Red Cross or United Fund.
- C. **Public address** is defined as the use of loud speakers throughout a school and/or on school grounds.
- D. **Mass digital messaging** is defined to include e-mails, text messages, and emerging digital messaging capabilities sent to more than a classroom of students.
- E. **Phone messaging** is defined as an automated system for calling multiple phone numbers.
- F. **Emergencies** are defined as situations that cause the closure or disruption of school or situations in which individuals or groups are at risk of injury or death.
- G. **School-related Activities** are defined as the school's activities, activities sponsored by student and parent organizations of the specific school the student attends, and student, parent and community activities coordinated/sponsored by the District, including Minnetonka Community Education.
- H. **Public Agencies or Organizations** are defined as those that are tax supported. Examples include city activities, elections, public hearings, and police/fire department information.

- I. **Community Organizations** – (Civic/Charitable/Student) are defined as organizations not operating for pecuniary profit.
- J. **Fraternal Organizations** are defined as organizations operating for the benefit of a specific group within the community.
- K. **Commercial Organizations/Individuals** are defined as profit-making businesses or individuals not affiliated with an organization that is defined herein, and that they provide opportunities or events that generate financial support to schools and/or the ~~School~~ District.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Superintendent, or designee, shall be responsible for the validity and relevance of all district-wide announcements.
- B. The school principal, or designee, shall determine the validity and relevance of all school announcements.

V. PARAMETERS FOR USE

- A. Public address announcements should be made at a time when there will be the least distraction from the educational process. Individual schools may designate a place, the time, and the duration for the posting or distributing of announcements. Every effort shall be made by the school office to avoid allowing announcements during the day other than the designated announcement time.
- B. A teacher or coach provided access to mass-messaging systems may only message students or parent groups for which system access was provided, and all messages must be related to school business.
- C. Except in emergency cases, phone messaging shall be limited to the hours of 9:00 am – 9:00 pm and shall exclude the dinner hour of 5:30 – 7:00 pm, whenever possible.
- D. An announcement may be made to the students notifying them of the availability of the materials or activities of supporting community organizations.
- E. Limited posters from Fraternal Organizations will be permitted when these organizations are sponsoring scholarship programs of direct benefit to students. Announcements of scholarship programs of direct benefit to students may also be made.
- F. Prior approval of any commercial/individual partnership that generates donations to our schools must be approved in advance by the superintendent/designee. Once approved, announcements related to the commercial offering may be made for informational purposes. The pupils hearing or receiving the announcements must be clearly informed that the purchase or use of the product or service is strictly voluntary. (This includes items such as yearbook, class rings, pictures and graduation announcements or other historical or traditional products or services that would be of sufficient benefit to school spirit, pupil/parent convenience, or student organization funding.)

- G. The Superintendent is responsible for establishing additional procedures and guidelines for use of mass messaging systems. Such guidelines and associated training shall emphasize audience, topics, timing and frequency for mass messaging.

Cross Ref: Policy #907: Distribution of Materials to Students
Policy #524: Electronic Technologies Acceptable Use Policy
Policy #515: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records

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