

TABCO MASTER AGREEMENT

HOT TOPICS

ISSUE 30

Use of Telecommunications in Master Agreement

Interoffice Mail

6.8 *Mail directed to teachers through the interoffice system will be delivered to teachers in the unopened interoffice envelopes.*

Telephones

10.26 *To the extent possible, telephones which provide for privacy shall be made available to teachers in each school for official telephone calls.*

So what does this mean for you?

You are not required to use your personal cell phone to make any work related calls. When a school closes early, teachers are not required to use their personal phones to call parents.

With the increased ease of technology and your email addresses widely known, teachers are communicating more readily with parents through email. As this has its advantages, it also has disadvantages.

BCPS, in conjunction with TABCO and other sources, has put together tips for emailing parents located in the “Effective Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences” Guide on the website. An excerpt is on the reverse. The overall premise is to keep emails professional.

Additionally, teachers should not be engaged in emailing or text messaging students. Teachers can post items such as homework assignments or class project timelines on school or personal websites, but should refrain from personal messages to and from students. Teachers should refrain from having students as “friends” on Facebook or all other forms of internet conversations. Teachers should also make sure their Facebook sites, Twitter entries, etc. are kept professional. For more information on this topic, log onto our website at www.tabco.org.

Each BCPS employee is held to the expectations as delineated in the BCPS “Telecommunications Acceptable Use Policy for Employees.” If you haven’t read the “terms and conditions” of this document recently, we encourage you to do so.
NOTE: *You are able to use BCPS email to communicate to and from the Association.*

Another increasing occurrence is unprofessional emails being sent to teachers from parents. If this situation arises, you are advised to immediately share the correspondence with your administrator, and work out a plan to end the unprofessional emails. In some extreme cases, administrators have instructed teachers to forward all emails from this individual to him/her and all correspondence will be conducted between the administrator and the parent. If the situation is not resolved, please feel free to contact your TABCO UniServ Director.

Excerpt from “Effective Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences”

Email can be an effective way to provide:

- A reminder for parents about a conference date, upcoming special events in the classroom, or deadlines for long-range projects.
- Short answers or requests for information such as clarification about homework assignments.
- Documentation of parent contacts. Keep a log or print emails from parents.
- Follow up to conferences showing progress or changes since the last meeting.

Email should not be used to address:

- Highly complex issues that require involvement of other staff members or students.
- Issues of a confidential nature such as IEP’s, 504’s, or issues involving other students.
- Emotionally charged issues.
- Situations that can be best addressed in a face-to-face conference.

To assure confidentiality:

- Do not use email to communicate confidential matters. Remember that many different people and not just the intended recipient of the message can read your email.
- Avoid the use of individual names in a subject line of an email.
- Do not “cc” or “bcc” individuals who are not directly involved.
- Be aware that email messages can be collected and used in legal proceedings.

If your rights are being violated or if you have questions regarding any items delineated above or in the Master Agreement, please contact your TABCO Association Representative at your site or contact your TABCO UniServ Director at 410-828-6403.

You are a part of TEAM TABCO and together we are strong!