

Traceable Communications System for Board Approval

To ensure student safety and comply with legal and board-mandated requirements for traceable communication, school employees shall only use approved platforms to interact with students electronically.

Approved Platforms

School employees may use the following district managed and traceable platforms to communicate with students electronically:

- Infinite Campus
- Schoology
- Google Workspace/Suite
- Microsoft Office 365
- District Website
- Connect-itz
- District-approved instructional tools that are verified by the Superintendent's Designee as traceable

Teachers delivering dual credit instruction shall be able to use institutionally managed platforms of the post secondary partner to communicate with students enrolled in dual credit courses. These include and are not limited to Canvas, Blackboard, and Starfish.

Guidelines for Untraceable Platforms

- Platforms such as Remind, GroupMe, BAND, and others may only be used for one-way, large group communication.
- Direct messaging with students on these platforms is strictly prohibited.
- Two-way communication must be disabled to ensure compliance with district policy and communication transparency.

Waiver/Parent Consent

A parent may provide consent to authorize a designated District employee or volunteer who is not a family member to communicate electronically with his or her child outside of the traceable communication system through the use of the approved district form.

Communication Updates

Any changes to the approved communication platforms during the calendar year will be communicated to all employees and families after Board approval and prior to implementation.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we have this rule?

SB 181 was passed by the Kentucky General Assembly during the 2025 Legislative Session to ensure that all school-related communication between employees and students is *traceable and transparent*. This law is designed to protect students, staff, and school districts by creating clear expectations around communication and by requiring that all electronic exchanges such as emails and messages occur on platforms that are approved and monitored by the district.

Following SB 181 is not optional; it is a legal requirement. The law reinforces the importance of professional boundaries, digital accountability, and student safety. By using district-approved, traceable communication platforms, we ensure there is documentation available should any question arise about the nature, content, or timing of a message.

This also protects employees as a professional. Traceable communication provides a safeguard by maintaining accurate records and aligning our practice with state law and district policy.

What does “traceable communication system” mean?

It's a collection of district-approved digital platforms that:

- Logs all communications to and from students,
- Allows parents to access and review these messages when requested, and
- Is the **only** approved means for electronic communication with students (Exceptions include one-way group communication with two-way communication disabled OR the parent grants an exemption)

Are employees able to use school email to communicate to personal accounts?

Yes, an employee is allowed to send an email from their school account to someone's personal email. As long as the employee initiates the communication using a traceable platform, such as their district email account, the conversation is considered compliant. Student responses will also be captured on this traceable platform.

What social media platforms are allowable to communicate with students under SB 181?

All employees are prohibited from communicating with a student at any time using social media. This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, Facebook Messenger, Instagram, SnapChat, X (formerly known as Twitter), and TikTok.

If I have a stepchild but am not their guardian and they attend FTIS, do I need to receive consent from the child's parent to text them?

An employee will need to be granted consent to communicate with their stepchild outside of the board approved traceable communication system if the employee is not a legal guardian of the child.

How can coaches, interns, or other employees communicate with their teacher placements?

Employees may have two way communication with students using an approved platform. Employees may communicate directly with students through Schoology, email, or the Connect-itz app.

****If you would like to use Microsoft Teams, the employee will need to create the initial chat to invite the student to the group. When properly configured, the Teams app provides pop-up notifications similar to text messages. To ensure these notifications function correctly, users must enable them both within the app and in their phone settings. (More information will be deployed regarding using Teams chat as a feature.)**

Since Teams is an option for employees to communicate with students, will students be able to create chats and add students to the chat feature?

Student-to-student communication via Microsoft Teams has been disabled. Students are not able to initiate chats or add other individuals to chat groups. All chats must be initiated by employees, who are the only users with access to this feature.

If an employee is reported to an administrator for violating the Traceable Communications policy, will the district really report to EPSB?

Yes. The district is required to report any violations of the Traceable Communications policy involving certified staff to the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).

What will occur if a classified employee or volunteer communicates with a student outside of the Traceable Communications System?

- Classified Employees: Violations will trigger an internal investigation, which may result in disciplinary action.
- Volunteers: Any violation will result in removal from volunteer status and loss of privileges to serve in that role.

What do I do if I receive unauthorized communication from a student?

Redirect the student to an approved platform, respond via an approved system, or message their parent via non-student channels. Simply receiving an unauthorized student message does NOT trigger an investigation and there is no need to report it as long as you redirect the student to an approved platform.

What if I need to communicate with a student urgently outside of the approved methods?

Unless there's a parent-granted exemption, urgent messaging must still be traceable. If it's a safety issue, contact the parent or guardian directly via appropriate channels.

When do we notify parents and students of this policy?

It is our obligation to inform within the first 10 days of school. In our district, this communication will be sent by the district on our first student day. Others may also communicate the change to our families.

How will individuals be updated if there are iterations and changes to the approved traceable communication system during the school year?

If the Board of Education makes changes to the approved traceable communications system, all employees and parents will be notified within 10 days of the change.

Is there additional training for employees?

All employees and volunteers will have a new module created in our Safe Schools training. In this module, everyone will review and verify that they have received communication related to the traceable communications system annually.

How does FTIS interpret "student" in the new law?

A "student" is an individual with an active FTIS enrollment in IC. Employees of the district are not subject to traceable communication requirements when communicating with students who are not enrolled in Fort Thomas Independent Schools. These individuals are not considered district students and, therefore, fall outside the scope of the district's student traceable communication policy.

Does SB 181 impact the way that you reach out to parents? Can you communicate directly with parents?

Yes, an employee does not have to change the ways in which they communicate with parents. SB 181 only applies to student communication.

Who is considered a volunteer?

Anyone that volunteers during the school day or at school sponsored events is considered a volunteer. Those NOT considered a volunteer are: Board of Education members, Booster group members, SBDMC members. Volunteers must only use Board approved traceable communication platforms when communicating with students.

What are purchased and verified traceable curriculum resources that have been approved by the Superintendent Designee?

Curriculum resources may be used by employees but if the resource is not verified traceable, student communication is prohibited. If not verified to be traceable, the messaging features shall not be used to collaborate with students. The resource may be used by employees and/or students outside of messaging.

We are working to define our workflow process for employees to submit a review request of curriculum resources. We will post approved resources publicly following approval. Currently we have approved Amplify CKLA, Amplify ELA, Savvas Envision, Savvas, McGraw Hill Reveal.

What's the process of gaining parent consent for student communication outside of the traceable communications system?

Employees who wish to communicate directly with an FTIS student outside of the approved traceable communication platforms must first obtain parent or guardian consent. This process must be initiated by the employee. An electronic consent form is available and can be provided upon request. To obtain the form, the employee must contact their school principal or Assistant Superintendent of Student Services. Following the parent form submission, the District will confirm form completion with the employee. The employee shall not communicate with a child outside of the approved platforms unless confirmation has been given.

The district will not send the waiver link directly to parents or include it in mass communications. This waiver is intended for specific, limited situations and should not be used as a way to bypass the Traceable Communication System. Its purpose is to support compliance with the law and protect employees.