

HEAD START COMMUNITY PROGRAM OF MORRIS COUNTY, INC.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY

This Social Media Policy and Electronic Communication Policy (“Policy”) sets rules and guidelines for any activity in social media by all Head Start Community Program of Morris County, Inc. (“Head Start”) employees and their use of Head Start electronic equipment. These rules are intended to be adaptable to the changes in technology and norms of online communications, and may be amended at any time, for any reason, without notice to users.

“Social media” applies to any web-based and mobile technologies that enable individuals or entities to disseminate or receive information, and includes, e-mail, texting, messaging, photographic transmission, social networking, blogging, commenting and bulletin boards.

Responsibility - Employees are not permitted to utilize the Head Start e-mail address or web site for personal use. As to personal e-mails, web sites and other domains is critical that no names or photographs of children in the program or their parents be posted without the approval of the Executive Director. Employees should refrain from making political opinions or comments regarding Head Start positions or actions.

Following Existing Policies and Terms of Use - Employees must observe and follow our Employee Handbook, (i) the policies of the particular online/social networking venue, and (ii) applicable law, and are prohibited from using social media to post or display comments about coworkers or supervisors that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, or a violation of the Head Start’s workplace policies against discrimination, harassment, or hostility.

Privacy and Confidentiality - No photo, etc. of a child in the program or his/her parents may be posted without the approval of the executive director and appropriate permissions from the family. It is also inappropriate to use or disclose personal or highly sensitive information about Head Start’s confidential or proprietary information in any form of social media, including financial information and business plans. Before posting any online material, ensure that the material is not knowingly false. If an employee finds that he or she has made a mistake, report it to a supervisor. If an employee is unsure about the effects of a post or other online action, ask a supervisor.

Use Your True Identity - When commenting on or promoting any Head Start service on any form of social media, the employee must clearly and conspicuously disclose employee's relationship with Head Start. Employees must not use their own personal online relationships or the Head Start network to influence polls, rankings, or web traffic. This is called "astroturfing" or "sock-puppeting" and is highly unethical.

Interact on Your Time -Employees must avoid use of social media during work time unless expressly permitted by the Executive Director.

Avoid Personal Attacks, Online Fights -If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement about Head Start matters that an employee disagrees with, the employee can voice an opinion, but should not escalate the conversation to a heated, personal argument. The employee should speak reasonably, factually, and with good humor and try to understand and credit the other person's point of view. Additionally, employees should avoid communicating with hostile personalities in an effort to avoid personal, professional, or credibility attacks. Responses are better handled by the Executive Director.

Identify Any Copyrighted or Borrowed Material with Citations and Links When publishing any online material through social media that include another's direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, employees should always use citations and link to the original material were applicable.

Electronic Equipment - Head Start has computers and their related files, voice mail, e-mail access to the Internet, and other means for electronic communications for business use only. Use of this equipment for personal reasons or harassment is prohibited. E-mail correspondence is not to be used to exchange information about individual children or families.

Head Start may access this system at any time and all activity is subject to monitoring. Employees should have no expectations of privacy using Head Start systems. Violations of the personal use prohibitions may be dealt with under the discipline policies.

The Executive Director's office will maintain a list of all passwords and codes. No employee will access another person's Head Start equipment without appropriate authorization.

Violators of this policy may be disciplined, up to and including discharge.