

BYLAWS

HOWELL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

BYLAWS

0169/page 1 of 2

Board Member Use of Electronic Mail/Internet

0169 BOARD MEMBER USE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL/INTERNET

The Board of Education believes that electronic communication among its members and the administration is an efficient and convenient way to exchange information, but must not be misused to deliberate issues that are appropriately discussed only in a public meeting. Therefore, Board members and administrators shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including but not limited to email, Internet web forums and Internet chat rooms. They should understand at all times that these communications may be considered school district records that are subject to public disclosure.

Electronic messaging communication shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety and ethics as other forms of Board-related communication (committee meetings, telephone calls, etc.). Board members shall adhere to the following guidelines when communicating electronically:

- A. Board members shall not use email or any other electronic messaging service as a substitute for deliberations at Board meetings. The Open Public Meetings Act defines a “meeting” as any gathering, whether corporeal or by means of communication equipment, attended by or open to all of the members of a public body, held with the intent to discuss or act as a unit upon the specific public business of that body.
- B. Board members shall be aware that email and email attachments received or prepared for use in Board business may be considered public records that may be inspected by any person upon request, unless otherwise made confidential by law.
- C. Board members shall avoid reference to confidential information about employees, pupils or others in email communications because of the risk of improper disclosure.
- D. Board members shall adhere to the district “acceptable use” policy in all email communications and shall refrain from sending inappropriate, profane, harassing or abusive emails.
- E. Board members shall not reveal their passwords to others in the network or to anyone outside of it, except to the system administrator. If any Board member has reason to believe a password has been lost or stolen, or that email is being accessed by someone without authorization, he/she shall notify the Superintendent immediately.



BYLAWS

HOWELL TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

BYLAWS

0169/page 2 of 2

Board Member Use of Electronic Mail/Internet

Electronic “Surveying” Communications

The Board of Education believes that “paperless Board meetings” are a type of electronic communication among its members and the administration that is an efficient and convenient way to exchange information, but must not be misused to deliberate issues that are appropriately discussed only in a public meeting. Therefore, Board members and administrators shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including but not limited to surveying, email, Internet web forums and Internet chat rooms.

The surveying features of paperless Board meetings shall be used consistent with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act by restricting its use in the following ways:

- A. The Board shall maintain and provide access to all electronic communications pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Records Act.
- B. Surveying is a type of electronic messaging communication, and shall conform to the same standards of judgment, propriety and ethics as other forms of Board-related communications (committee meetings, telephone calls, etc.).
- C. Board members shall not use surveys, email or any other electronic messaging service as a substitute for deliberations at Board meetings. The Open Public Meetings Act defines a “meeting” as any gathering, whether corporeal or by means of communication equipment, attended by or open to all of the members of a public body, held with the intent to discuss or act as a unit upon the specific public business of that body.
- D. Surveying will not be used for topics referring to confidential information about employees, pupils or others in email communications because of the risk or improper disclosure.
- E. The district will avoid the appearance of conducting Board discussion or actions, in which opinions are exchanged among a quorum of Board members through repeated survey questions and answers, outside an open public meeting.
- F. The Board shall annually review its electronic communication policy and practices with the Board Attorney.

N.J.S.A. 10:6-4 et seq.

N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1 et seq.

Adopted: 03 January 2013

