



Walla Walla Public Schools
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Text Messaging & Instant Messaging Communication Guidelines

Creating a Professional Texting/Instant Messaging Environment

Purpose

These guidelines have been created to ensure Walla Walla Public Schools staff utilize text messaging (texting) and instant messaging (IM) technology for educational purposes and in a responsible manner. This technology is a powerful tool and can help staff members improve communications and efficiencies with colleagues, students, and parents. We strive to maintain a professional approach to all our methods of communication throughout our school district.

Definition of Text/Instant Messaging

Text/Instant Messaging is typically sending and receiving short text or multimedia messages between cell phones, but can also include similar web-based messaging apps on any electronic device. Messaging applications are used as quick and convenient methods of communicating and according to the PEW Research Center, texting is the most widely-used app on a smartphone, with 97% of Americans using it at least once a day. Examples include, but are not limited to: iPhone and Android Messages apps, Google Chat/Hangouts, SnapChat, and Facebook Messenger.

District Approved Process and Platforms

The Washington State Office of the Secretary of State has determined text messages are public records if they relate to the conduct of public business and should comply with records retention/archival guidelines. This means any school/work related text message district employees send is considered a public record and subject to inquiry. Walla Walla Public Schools is providing professional texting solutions that support continued use of texting technology but can archive work messages and keep them separate from your personal text messages.

These supported platforms are:

- Remind for Schools. Texting app for teachers and administrators to connect with students and parents. Use WWPS Google account to login to remind.com – select your school – create your class or group.
- Google Voice/Text. Texting app associated with WWPS Google account for all District owned or stipended smart cellular phones.

Professional Texting/IM Use

- Professional Texting/IM communication with students, parents, and colleagues to address instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters. Examples include coaches sending out practice or game information, teachers reminding of an upcoming exam, etc.
- Professional Texting/IM communication should be treated like a workplace or classroom setting.
- All school communication content must follow the district's Acceptable Use Policy/Procedure: 2022

Personal Texting/IM Use

- All personal Texting/IM use and content is NOT related to Walla Walla Public Schools.
- WWPS employees SHOULD NOT communicate with current WWPS students using their personal Texting/IM account. Separate personal from professional, just like email and social media.

Additional Information

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