Guidelines for Instant Messaging

Considerations Before You Instant Message

- Remember that Instant Messaging is subject to Meridian Joint School District #02 Electronic Use Policies.
- Instant messaging (IM) creates a written record and just like email, all electronic conversations may be monitored by district staff.
- IM should not be used in place of predefined support methods (Help Desk, PowerSchool Hotline).
- Instant Messaging should be used primarily for business.
- Find appropriate times to Instant Message – Messaging a teacher during class may not be appropriate. Respect a staff member’s presence status.
- Watch your language and be careful of confidential or sensitive information – it can be forwarded out of your system instantly, and it could end up on a screen being projected to a classroom.
- Like email, users should have no expectation of privacy when Instant Messaging.
- Do not share personal info in an Instant Message.

Instant Messaging Etiquette*

- In a district as large as ours, set parameters for IM ahead of time. - Find out if or when it is ok to IM with someone.
- Respect IM status updates. — If the contact's presence status is Available (the presence icon is green), the contact might be available for a conversation, so you can start an IM conversation with the person.
- If a contact's presence status is set to:
  - Busy — refrain from sending a message to the contact unless it's urgent.
  - In a Call — they might be slow to respond or might not respond at all. Responses will vary by person and by the nature of the call.
  - Do Not Disturb — do not send the contact a message unless it's an emergency.
- If you are initiating the IM conversation, your first message should state the topic and ask the other person if they have time for an IM conversation with you. — Begin with a question such as, "Are you busy?" or "Is this a good time?" This might not be necessary with someone you work with frequently and when the question is quick and simple (for example, "Are you going to join us for the meeting?").
- Don’t take offense if your contact doesn’t respond immediately. — The contact might be unable to do so, even if the contact’s presence status is Available. Assume the contact will respond when free. Avoid messaging someone repeatedly when you don’t get a response.
- If you receive a terse response (for example, "in a meeting - talk later"), do not be offended. — While this might be considered a rude response in person, it is a perfectly acceptable way for a contact to let you know they’re unavailable for IM at the time.
- Emoticons – graphical representations of facial expressions – can be useful in providing context for your messages. — Emoticons can help support a more natural form of communication.
- Avoid having too many "good byes" when you and your colleague attempt to end the conversation. — The first person to indicate an end to the conversation is usually enough.
- If you are not sure of the sender’s message, contact them directly.
- If you personalize Lync with a photo, be certain the picture is of you and that it is appropriate and professional.

- Partially derived from “Microsoft Lync 2010 How-To”