



Official BVSD Style and Usage Guidelines

Please follow these official *BVSD style and usage guidelines* in all your IM communications.

Important Etiquette Tips ★

- ✍ Avoid instant messaging when issues seem *tense, emotional, or confrontational*. Instead, *pick up the phone* and call the individual, or meet face to face
- ✍ Never forward an instant message *without the permission of the original sender*
- ✍ Watch what you write: Whatever you say on instant messages can be accidentally forwarded to someone else. So, if you don't mind it in the newspaper...
- ✍ Remember sarcasm doesn't translate well on instant messaging
- ✍ Avoid words that can have a negative connotation, unless stated in person. Examples would be "Fine" or "SHOUTING IN ALL CAPS"

💡 *Don't Forget*

- ❑ *IM is not necessarily confidential*. The communications of District employees in the form of instant messaging may constitute a "public record" and therefore may be subject to public inspection under C.R.S. 24-72-203 of the Colorado Open Records Act
- ❑ *Honor privacy*. Using student names and information in an instant message is *not* a violation of FERPA if it is to district staff who have a specific and legitimate need to know such information. Do not send student information to those who do not have a legitimate need to know (FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g)
- ❑ *Be discreet*. Please do not add unnecessary personal commentary about parents, students, or employees in any instant message

Making Messaging Work

- ❑ Keep your texting *simple* and *to the point*. Send any lengthy text in an attachment
- ❑ Know when to say goodbye. Messaging should always be brief
- ❑ Inquire if the other party can instant message: "Hi, are you available?" or "Can I call right now?"
- ❑ Always indicate your current instant messaging status, so that others know you are available

