

**WALLA WALLA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**REAL-TIME MESSAGING BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 8220**

---

**I. POLICY BACKGROUND/PURPOSE**

Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) recognizes that real-time communication with students, including via text message and similar tools, can support enrollment, retention, and timely information sharing. This policy ensures that all real-time messaging (1) aligns with institutional and legal compliance requirements and state and federal regulations, (2) protects student privacy, (3) preserves public records, and (4) ensures appropriate and equitable use of college-supported tools.

**II. AUTHORITY**

Board Policy 1370; RCW 19.190; RCW 40.14; TCPA; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (FERPA); 34 CFR Part 99.

**III. SCOPE OF POLICY**

- A. This policy applies to all WWCC employees who engage in one-to-one or one-to-many real-time messaging with students, including communication through mobile apps, push notification systems, and web-based platforms.
- B. Exclusions
  - 1. Emergency alerts and safety notifications
  - 2. Communications between employees
  - 3. Messaging performed by student workers in their employment role

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

- A. *Real-time Messaging* – Any two-way or push-based communication sent via text message or app-based messaging platforms that are received instantly or near-instantly by students.
- B. *Approved Messaging Tools* – College-approved platforms with authentication, opt-in/opt-out features, and records retention capability.
- C. *FERPA Compliance* – Adherence to federal privacy rules protecting educational records and personally identifiable information (PII).

**V. POLICY**

- A. Real-time messaging between employees and students may only occur through college approved applications / platforms that include opt-in functionality.
  - 1. Unapproved applications / platforms include, but are not limited to:
    - a. Personal texting apps (iMessage, Android Messages, etc.)
    - b. Social media DMs (Instagram, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Discord, etc.)
    - c. Unmonitored group messaging apps (GroupMe, Band, Remind Free, etc.)
    - d. Encrypted or anonymous apps (WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, etc.)
  - 2. The following tools are permitted when accessed via WWCC credentials and managed centrally by the college:
    - a. Canvas Inbox

- b. Zoom 1:1 Chat
  - c. Slate Text (Admissions/Advising only)
  - d. StudentAccess / OnCampus (TRIO/Student Life only)
  - e. Microsoft Teams (for NetID-authenticated communication)
- B. A student’s consent (opt-in) is required before real-time messaging may begin.
- 1. Consent includes implied consent.
- C. All real-time messages between employees and students are considered student records and must be retained per Administrative Policy 2420 in compliance with RCW 40.14.
- D. Employees must not send confidential or sensitive information subject to FERPA or HIPAA through real-time messaging platforms as they lack guarantees of privacy.
- E. Real-time messages must:
- 1. Identify the sender's name, role, and WWCC affiliation on first contact.
  - 2. Be mirrored in Canvas or email if related to class content or deadlines.
  - 3. Be compliant with public records retention.
  - 4. Follow communication guidelines outlined in corresponding administrative procedure.
- D. Students may not be required to accept real-time messages to their personal devices as a condition of academic success or participation.

<p><b>Policy Contact:</b> <u>Vice President, Administrative Services</u></p> <p><b>Approved by (Department/Body):</b> <u>Dr. Chad Hickox, President</u></p> <p><b>Date Originally Approved:</b> <u>August 19, 2025</u></p> <p><b>Last Reviewed/Revised on:</b> _____</p>
--