



Text Messaging Records Retention

Text Messaging Records Retention Policy

Approved By and Date:

Board of Trustees 3/13/2020

Executive Leadership Team 2/27/2020

Policy:

The Texas Legislature defines a government record as any recorded information created or received by a local government, state agency, elected official, or government employee that documents the transaction of government business. College business conducted through text message creates a government record which is subject to the College's records retention schedule, even if the message is exchanged by an elected official or employee on a cell phone or other mobile device not owned and paid for by the College.

Procedures:

Approved By and Date:

Executive Leadership Team 2/27/2020

Due to the difficulties in archiving text message history for records retention purposes, Kilgore College employees and Board of Trustees members must limit conducting public business through text messaging on any device, personal or College-owned, to only "transitory information," which is not required to be retained under the College's records retention schedule. Transitory information is defined as: a record of temporary usefulness that is not an integral part of a records retention schedule of a local government, is not regularly filed within a local government's recordkeeping system, and is required only for a limited period of time for the completion of an action by an official or employee of a local government or in the preparation of other records for retention. Transitory records are not essential to the fulfillment of statutory obligations or to the documentation of government functions. Such records are routine information used for basic communication, but not for conducting the business of the College.

If a person initiates a text message conversation that will result in conducting College business, or a conversation moves beyond transitory information, employees and Board members must instruct that person of the need to continue further communication via email, phone, or in person. Sensitive information should never be sent by text message, including social security numbers, student ID numbers, credit card numbers, and passwords. Employees and Board members should delete transitory, business-related text messages as soon as possible.

This procedure does not apply to any text messaging platform which the College subscribes to in order to conduct mass communication (Rave Alert) or to facilitate communication between students, faculty, and staff (Remind), as these messages are archived.

Examples of Transitory Information:

- a. A request for communication via email, phone, or in person
- b. Informal notices of meetings
- c. Notification of being late to a meeting

- d. Checking on whether a person is going to attend an event/meeting
- e. Requesting that someone else attend a meeting in an employee's absence
- f. Notification that an email has been sent and needs to be reviewed
- g. Giving/seeking directions to a location
- h. Scheduling information, such as availability for a meeting
- i. Other routine messages that would not be kept if it were a paper or email communication

Examples of Conducting College Business:

- a. Discussing personnel-related data or information
- b. Explaining or evaluating College policy
- c. Discussing contracts or formal correspondence
- d. Deliberating how to respond to the press or Public Information Act requests
- e. Discussing a problem with or about a student