



EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Procedures

1.0 Personal vs. Professional

Every time you communicate, whether it's in-person or on social media, you shape public opinion about you, your profession, your school, your board, and public education.

Blended accounts are not recommended when the employee intends to use the account for instructional purposes with students and/or to provide regular class updates to their students' parents/guardians. The best practice for teachers is to create separate class or school accounts.

Regardless of whether the employee maintains one or multiple accounts, conduct on social media will be appropriate.

As such, staff will use sound judgment and due care when using social media while on and off duty.

- Maintain a sense of professionalism at all times – in your personal and professional lives.
- We strongly advise against the use of a blended personal and professional account. Staff are encouraged to maintain a clear distinction between their personal and professional social media use and should have two separate accounts for these purposes.
- If staff choose to have personal Social Media accounts, they should be separate from their professional accounts (e.g., Personal Learning Network (PLN), classroom, department, school accounts).
- Social Media accounts for the purpose of voluntary, self-directed professional development are supported, e.g., to build a PLN.
- Staff will communicate with students for educational purposes only. Avoid sharing personal information with students.
- Posting any inappropriate images or content cannot happen on classroom, department, and professional accounts.
- If you have a personal Social Media account that students become aware of, refer them back to the educational account for discussion rather than permitting personal or private messages.

2.0 Authorization

Board authorization is not required for staff to open a personal Social Media account. If you plan to use social media for instructional purposes (e.g., classroom Twitter account or blog), inform your principal of your intended use.

Classroom Social Media accounts are seen as extensions of the school and must reflect the mission, vision, and priorities of District School Board Ontario North East. If a concern is raised about a classroom account, the principal will address any activity that may negatively impact the school, staff, and students. Garner informed consent from parents/guardians prior to posting and/or creating accounts for students. (Appendix A)

3.0 Professional boundaries

Maintaining professional boundaries on social media is critical to sustaining public trust and ensuring relationships with students remain professional.

- All online dialogue and interactions with students and families should be for educational purposes only.
- Your Social Media interactions should be professional and reflect the board's character attributes: caring, co-operative, honest, inclusive, respectful, and responsible.
- Be mindful of all equity and inclusivity-related board policies and the Ontario Human Rights Code when posting content.
- Your tone should be formal and professional when communicating with students and others via social media.
- Do not send private messages and/or texts of a personal nature.
- Never share information with students online that would not be appropriate to share in a classroom, or school/community setting. What is inappropriate in the classroom is also inappropriate on social media.
- Keep your posts positive and do not engage in negative or critical conversations online.
- Retweets, likes and favourites are perceived as endorsements. These interactions should be limited and done with care.

4.0 Legal Implications

The inappropriate use of social media can result in an employee being subject to disciplinary action, being criminally prosecuted or being sued civilly in court.

It is important to note that electronic communication and social media can also be used as evidence in criminal and civil proceedings.

If you would normally seek out permission to use content in the offline world, you should do so when posting another's content in social media. Posting of material can be considered "fair use" under the Copyright Act. If it is not "fair use" then you need to get permission to post copyrighted material.

See Ontario College of Teachers: Professional Advisory – Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media (<https://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/use-of-electronic-communication-and-social-media>).

5.0 Privacy and confidentiality

Safety is the overriding concern with regard to information posted online. Always respect the privacy and confidentiality of student information. Breaches of privacy and confidentiality can occur with respect to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and Board policies and procedures.

- Familiarize yourself with the Social Media tool's privacy settings. Settings can change without notice so you will need to check them frequently. This often occurs when platforms are updated.
- Ensure privacy settings are appropriate and protect the privacy and confidentiality of students and their work.
- Employees must never disclose confidential information about the school, students, and colleagues.
- Particular care must be taken with students for whom the principal has identified custody/safety concerns.
- Personal information, including student names, location, etc., should not be posted on social media without informed consent from students' parents/guardians. This includes, but is not limited to blogs, student work, individual and group photographs, videos featuring the student or other identifying information.
- Informed consent is necessary when placing personal student information, photos, videos and work online. Consent is provided via the Student Release Form (Appendix A) and iPad Loan Agreement Form (Appendix B) that is sent home with all students at the start of the school year.
- Consent is not required for photos and videos that are taken at public meetings and/or events.
- Everything you post can be altered and shared, even if your account is anonymous. Comments expressed privately between Social Media users can be shared in a more public domain, even with privacy settings set to high. Think before you post.

6.0 Who to “friend” and “follow”

Staff should not have online interactions with students on social media outside of forums/platforms dedicated to educational use. This is consistent with the advice provided in Ontario College of Teachers: Professional Advisory – Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media (<https://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/use-of-electronic-communication-and-social-media>).

- Do not issue or accept student friend requests or follow individual students on social media.
- Staff should decline students' friend requests on social media.
- If you have a classroom account where you share important curricular information with students, students may follow your account. For the purposes of learning, you do not need to follow them back. Instead, you can encourage students to use tools, like hashtags, so that you can follow their online conversations. These can be linked to a specific area of study.

7.0 Professional hours

Social Media operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This doesn't mean you have to. Monitoring and replying at any time of the day or night sets up an expectation that you will always do so.

- We encourage staff to establish "professional office hours" and share them with students and parents so that they know if and when you will respond to questions that are posted on social media.
- Student safety and supervision is a top priority. Staff can post to social media during the instructional day, only if it is for educational purposes and if student safety can be maintained.

8.0 Maintenance and monitoring responsibilities

At the discretion of the school principal, school Social Media accounts may be run by one or more school staff members. School Social Media accounts must not be run by a student or community volunteer. School Social Media accounts represent the brand of the school and the Board and must represent and uphold their values. Communication sent out via Social Media accounts should have a consistent voice and be positive in tone.

It is important that staff regularly monitor their Social Media accounts.

- Posts and comments of an inappropriate nature or that contain personal or irrelevant information should be documented, removed/deleted promptly, if permitted by the tool.
- In some cases, it may be necessary to report a post or comment to an administrator for investigation. Please use your professional judgment in this regard. If you would report a behaviour if it happened at school, you should report similar online behaviour.
- Consider setting your privacy settings so that you are notified if you are tagged or mentioned in photos or posts. Remove tags that may reflect negatively on you.
- Consider forwarding Social Media notifications to your email so that you can see what is being said about you online without logging into your Social Media accounts.

9.0 Duty of care

There are concerns about personal duty of care in terms of monitoring social media when a student identifies that he or she is in crisis. All of the expectations and duties of employees apply with respect to conduct, responding to a child in need of protection or in crisis, as well as policies and procedures generally, and specifically regarding bullying, or activities that would be actionable through progressive discipline.

Appendices

Appendix A: Blanket Consent Form

Appendix B: iPad Student Loan Terms & Agreement

References

Ontario College of Teachers: Professional Advisory - Use of Electronic Communication and social media (September 27, 2017)

<https://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/use-of-electronic-communication-and-social-media>

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90m56>

Peel District School Board Resources:

- Social Media Guidelines for Staff
- Student Blanket Consent Form



School Year: _____

Dear Families,

Each school year, we seek parental permission for a number of school-based activities.

By signing the consent form below, you are giving permission to:

- Post your child's schoolwork in the school's foyer and/or hallways. Only your child's first name will appear.
- Include your child's full name and grade on awards/trophies that will be kept in the school's front foyer and/or hallways.
- Mention your child's achievements and/or post your child's schoolwork in our school's newsletter, website, and Social Media accounts. Your child's first name and grade level may be referred to. Grades or marks will not be posted.
- Include your child's full name in school programs or student awards (graduation programs, school plays and musical productions, school brochures), and school yearbook.
- Use photos and/or videos of your child in our school's newsletter, yearbook, website, and Social Media accounts, as well as the board's website, Social Media accounts and internal publications. Photos will be of groups of students and will not identify any individual student (e.g., a group of students playing basketball).
- Have your child recorded or photographed by a staff member, volunteer, or student teacher as part of the learning program. These photos and videos may be used within the school or board and may appear on school/board websites and/or Social Media accounts, including but not limited to Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.
- Have your child recorded, photographed and/or interviewed for media stories throughout the school year. This does not include photographs taken for political purposes (e.g., for politician's newsletters). The images and/or audio may be used in local, national, or international news stories about school programs, initiatives, awards and/or events. Your child's full name and image may accompany the story.

In providing this consent, I acknowledge that any photos/videos posted on the school's and/or board's website or Social Media accounts may be widely circulated to the public and may be viewed by anyone with access to the Internet. If I provide consent, and then later revoke my consent, I acknowledge that although the photos/videos will be removed from the board's websites and Social Media accounts, it may not be possible to remove all traces of personal information from the Internet.

Please complete one of the options below and return this form to your child's teacher. If you do not consent to ALL the items above, please complete the second section below (No Authorization Given).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE: "I consent to this authorization and release."

I am the parent or guardian of _____
and I hereby consent to the initiatives described in the letter above. I understand this consent will be effective during the current school year. Consent can be revoked at any time by contacting the school office.

Parent / Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

NO AUTHORIZATION GIVEN: "I DO NOT consent to this authorization and release."

I am the parent or guardian of _____
and I do not consent to the initiatives described in the letter above. I understand this refusal will be effective during the current school year. Consent can be revoked at any time by contacting the school office.

Parent / Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Signature: _____



District School Board
Ontario North East

APPENDIX B

**DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ONTARIO NORTH EAST
iPad – STUDENT LOAN TERMS & AGREEMENT**

School: _____

School Year: _____

Student Responsibility:

1. My iPad is my responsibility, and I will not leave it in unsupervised areas or loan the iPad to another student.
2. I will strictly adhere to the DSB1 [Appropriate Use of Technology Policy 1.2.10](#).
3. I will treat the iPad appropriately and will report any mechanical or technical issues to the teacher immediately.
4. I will keep all passwords confidential. I will take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to access and use them.
5. I agree to use the iPad for appropriate, legitimate, and responsible communication.
6. I will not record, take a picture, or video tape anyone, without prior knowledge and consent of all involved, including, but not limited to, my teacher and fellow students.
7. Students will be provided a case for the iPad. It is a protective case, and the iPad must remain in it at all times.

Home Use:

8. All terms and responsibilities for care and use of the iPad apply while on and off school property.
9. Students must bring the iPad to school every day. **It must be charged, and ready to use.** It is not to be left at home or anywhere else.

Risk Management for Students and Parents/Guardians:

10. In the event of damage or loss, each consequence will be on a case-by-case basis. DSB1 reserves the right to charge Parents/Guardians/Students for repair/replacement if the damage was caused maliciously.
11. Parents/Guardians can explore home or other insurance to cover any future loss or damage costs.
12. Students iPads will be subject to routine monitoring by teachers, administrators, and technology staff and/or Police if deemed necessary by administration. Users shall have no expectation of privacy from these groups while using DSB1 electronic resources. Teachers and/or administration may conduct an individual search of a student's iPad contents including but not limited to contents of files, music, videos, communication undertaken by way of the iPads or other related items if there is suspicion that DSB1 policies or guidelines have been violated. Students are instructed to keep personal information about themselves and others off the iPad.

General:

13. Students will leave the iPad at the school in the assigned location and at the assigned date/time for updating when required.
14. Failure to sign or adhere to the policy items noted in this document will result in the loss of board equipment.
15. The iPad and adaptor/charger are the property of DSB1 and will be returned in good working condition at the end of the school year on or before the date provided by school staff. If a student transfers to

another school, the iPad and adaptor will be returned to their school one week prior to the last attended school day.

16. To ensure safe, responsible use of the iPad, students are expected to complete Digital Citizenship assignments as determined by their school administration before they are allowed to use the DSB1 iPad.

Accounts:

17. DSB1 will create an iTunes account for each student receiving an iPad. This is required for managing the iPad, and applications that will be placed on the iPad.
18. DSB1 will create a Google Apps for Education account for each student. Students will have access to applications (Apps) that allow them to create and edit documents, spreadsheets, drawings, and presentations. It provides students a place to store all their files. Google Drive allows teachers and students to collaborate and share documents with each other and can be accessed anywhere there is an Internet connection. In addition to Google Drive and Gmail, students will also have access to other services such as a personal calendar, website creation tools, and blogging.
19. From time to time, teachers and students may need to create additional accounts to use other educational apps like Showbie, Nearpod, and Socrative.
20. Access to these accounts is considered a privilege. DSB1 reserves the right to revoke access to these services if there is a reason to believe the user has violated DSB1's [Appropriate Use of Technology Policy 1.2.10](#)
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Select one option for your child:

- School and Home Use (Student will take iPad home every evening and return it to school fully charged every day).
- School Use Only (Student will pick up iPad every morning and return at the end of the school day i.e., it will not leave the school building).

By signing below, I agree to the terms and conditions in this document

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Parent / Guardian Signature: _____

ONCE SIGNED, THIS FORM TO BE FILED IN STUDENT'S OSR – DOCUMENTATION FOLDER