

Procedure Title	Social Media and Web Publishing		
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Review Date		Originator	Administrative Council
References			
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA); Copyright Act (Canada); Education Act (Ontario), Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA); OCT "Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media"; AP 1610-D "Board Logo Use and Publishing Standards"; Thames Valley District School Board <i>Corporate Guide to Social Media</i>			

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) recognizes the advantages of centrally supporting the development of corporate, departmental, and school-based social media accounts/sites through a process of open communication, and transparency. It also recognizes that the creation of social media accounts/sites enables individual schools to highlight initiatives and events and to make readily available school profiles and other educational links.
- 1.2 This procedure has been developed to ensure effective and ethically appropriate use of social media within and for BWDSB. Included are the minimum standards that must be met and maintained for all social media accounts and sites associated with BWDSB to ensure board schools, staff and students are represented in a positive, accurate, and transparent manner, with an emphasis on protection of personal privacy.
- 1.3 The board reserves the right to remove content or websites that are not compliant with this procedure.
- 1.4 This procedure will be administered by the director of education or designate.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 General Guidelines

- 2.1.1 The use of social media accounts and websites will be guided by the principles outlined in this procedure and operate in conjunction with the Copyright Act (Canada), the Personal Information and Protection of Electronic Documents Act (Canada) (PIPEDA), the Education Act (Ontario), the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Ontario) (MFIPPA), Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media", and other relevant policies, procedures and legislation.
- 2.1.2 All BWDSB schools will be provided with a minimum standard board-hosted website.

- 2.1.3 All board or department-related social media accounts and websites will provide a homepage-link to the main board website. All school-related social media accounts will provide a link to the school website. School websites will also provide a link back to the main board website.
- 2.1.4 The board logo will appear on the homepage of all board or department-related social media accounts and websites, following guidelines described in AP 1610-D "Board Logo Use and Publishing Standards". Official school accounts will display the school logo.
- 2.1.5 The content of all school, board, and department social media accounts and/or websites must be consistent with the educational aims of BWDSB and applicable board policies and procedures. Content posted to school, board, and department-related social media accounts/sites should be positive in tone, informative, and relevant to the school/board community. Examples include:
 - a) Good news items celebrating student success
 - b) Important dates, public meeting, and event notifications
 - c) News on programming
 - d) School, bus, and event cancellations
 - e) Advisories as necessary during crisis situations
 - f) Education-related updates and links to resources
- 2.1.6 Board, department, and school social media accounts and websites will not include any advertisements, logos, testimonials, or endorsements of any product or company except for official partnerships.
- 2.1.7 Board, department, and school social media accounts and websites may contain links to external sites that are reputable and relevant, providing that an appropriate disclaimer is clearly displayed.
- 2.1.8 Board, department, and school social media accounts and websites will not include any personal information such as phone numbers, addresses, or email addresses for staff or students. (See also section 2.5.2(c) for a more detailed listing of personal information)
- 2.1.9 The staff member(s) designated as responsible for a particular social media account and website must ensure that there is adequate protection from unauthorized access, and from manipulation and alteration of information that is posted to that specific account/ website. Assistance can be obtained from the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department.

2.2 Social Media Usage by Employees

- 2.2.1 BWDSB employees may communicate with students only about educational matters and only through BWDSB-issued email accounts, applications, and classroom websites. Any BWDSB employee who wishes to utilize any technology for electronic communication other than those listed above to communicate with students should contact the school principal and obtain approval from the superintendent responsible for ICT before utilizing the technology.

2.2.2 Personal Accounts/Sites

BWDSB recognizes that some employees may maintain personal blogs or websites, and/or contribute posts to personal blogs or personal websites or web pages of others and/or participate in social networking sites such as, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. BWDSB acknowledges that these can be excellent tools for professional development and two-way communication. However, employees may not communicate with students via these means. Additionally, employees who participate in

social media, must abide at all times with all legal requirements, including compliance with all privacy and information laws. Employees may be held accountable for publications on social media sites even if they are made to a limited group of 'friends' or contacts and not generally accessible to the public.

Employees must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a) Social media usage by teachers is also guided by standards of professional conduct as per The Education Act, collective agreements, and the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). Please refer to the OCT's "Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media".
- b) Teachers are required to uphold the Ontario College of Teachers Ethical Standards of Practice, both in and out of school, which extends to the digital realm.
- c) Do not make or post disparaging, discriminatory, defamatory, confidential, threatening, libellous, obscene, or slanderous comments about BWDSB, its employees, students, or school community members.
- d) Do not post copyrighted information (refer to section 2.7).
- e) Do not use BWDSB or school logos or email addresses on personal social media sites.
- f) Ensure that your profile and related content (even if it is of a personal and not of an official nature) is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with your position. The lines between public and private, personal, and professional are blurred in online social networks.
 - i. Do not use racial slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in your workplace.
 - ii. Do not endorse any commercial products, services, or entities related to your work at BWDSB. For example, if you are a custodian, do not endorse cleaning products; if you are a teacher, do not endorse learning programs.
 - iii. Do not post inappropriate photos or information of yourself online.
 - iv. Do not choose an inappropriate avatar.
 - v. Do not link to inappropriate content.
- g) BWDSB employees must include disclaimers on their personal blogs that their views are their own and do not reflect the position of BWDSB.

2.2.3 Communication with Students

- a) Employees have the responsibility of maintaining an appropriate employee-student relationship at all times.
- b) No Internet-based communication shall occur between employees and students on a non-district sponsored system.
- c) Employees may communicate with students about school-related matters via BWDSB e-mail. Employees may not communicate with students via text messaging, social media websites, or their private email, unless no other form of communication is available or feasible. Under these circumstances the following conditions apply:
 - i. Prior approvals must be obtained from the principal (in consultation with the area superintendent).
 - ii. A separate account for school communication will be established. Personal social media accounts will not be used.
 - iii. Passwords and access to these accounts must be provided to the principal.

- iv. Employees will ensure that the notification tool settings (where at all possible) are set such that messages are only broadcast out and any replies received are not viewable by the general public.
 - v. Employees will notify parent(s)/guardian(s) before using social media for classroom activities.
- d) If a student contacts an employee, the employee should not respond online. The employee could speak to the student the next school day and suggest other methods of communication – such as an email to the employee’s work address. If a student continues to contact the employee, the employee must share the information with the school or building administrator or supervisor.
- e) Employees should not become ‘friends’ with or ‘fans’ of students or their parents online.

2.3 Corporate or Department Social Media Accounts/Sites

2.3.1 Main Board Website

- a) The board will maintain a corporate board website.
- b) The director of education, or designate, will be responsible for the suitability of content for the board website.
- c) The manager of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department will be designated the immediate responsibility for managing the infrastructure of the board website.
- d) Board staff responsible for web maintenance will work in consultation with groups within the board to manage and publish appropriate material on the board website. Departments will be responsible for ensuring they have designated staff that are trained in how to update and maintain their respective department web pages.

2.3.2 Social Media Accounts/Sites

- a) In addition to the main BWDSB website, the board may also establish corporate or department social media accounts.
- b) All BWDSB corporate and department social media accounts will display the board logo, as per AP 1610-D “Board Logo Use and Publishing Standards”.
- c) There may be circumstances where corporate or department social media account should only be used to broadcast out information. In these situations, account notification tool settings should be set (where at all possible) such that messages are only broadcast out and any replies received are not viewable by the general public.
- d) The objectives of establishing and maintaining corporate or department social media accounts are:
 - i) to enhance communication with parents and stakeholders
 - ii) to reach parents and stakeholders that are not utilizing the websites of the board and its schools
 - iii) to increase traffic to board/school websites through social media updates.

- e) Through corporate or department social media account(s), BWDSB may provide brief and timely updates on items such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - i) links to 'good news' stories celebrating student success
 - ii) public meeting and event notifications
 - iii) news on important decisions and developments affecting the board
 - iv) school and bus cancellations
 - v) links to Regular Meeting of the Board webcasts and/or video recordings
 - vi) links to media releases
 - vii) advisories as necessary during crisis situations
 - viii) education-related updates and links to resources
 - ix) clarification of issues and instances of misinformation in the media
- f) The board communications officer is responsible for the design and implementation of corporate social media accounts.
- g) Usernames and passwords enabling access to corporate social media accounts will be held by the communications officer and other trustworthy administrative staff as deemed necessary by the director of education.
- h) Ongoing maintenance, updating, and monitoring is the responsibility of the communications officer and/or designate.
- i) All requests for the posting of information on BWDSB corporate social media accounts will be filtered through the communications officer, and when necessary, vetted through the Corporate Services department.
 - i) The communications officer will proactively seek out items to post with a view to ensuring that social media accounts are updated three to five times at a weekly minimum in order to maintain relevance and readership.

2.4 School, Department, and Board-Related Social Media Accounts/Sites

2.4.1 Creating an Account/Site

- a) While BWDSB cannot control nor be held responsible for external social media accounts/websites created by parents, students, and community members, specific guidelines are necessary when it comes to the creation of school, department, and board-related accounts by schools and school/board committees. This would include (but not be limited to) social media accounts and websites (in addition to the minimum standard board-hosted school website) created by schools, school councils, school/board programs and departments, and board committees.
- b) Those seeking to create school-based social media accounts/websites should direct their requests to the school principal for approval (in consultation with the area superintendent, as required) and to ensure compliance with and understanding of BWDSB guidelines, policies/procedures, and relevant legislation related to social media.

- c) Principals will have immediate responsibility for the content of school-related social media accounts/sites. The principal will determine who will be the school webmaster, and also who will be responsible for the content and publication of the website and associated links. All usernames and passwords must be shared with the principal.
- d) Those seeking to create department/board-related social media accounts/websites must direct their requests to the appropriate superintendent for approval and to ensure compliance with and understanding of BWDSB guidelines, policies/procedures, and relevant legislation related to social media.
- e) Superintendents will oversee department/board-related social media accounts/sites and assign responsibility for the content and monitoring, as appropriate. All usernames and passwords must be shared with the superintendent.
- f) The principal or superintendent may direct the requesting party to the communications officer to ensure that any new social media applications are positioned to consistently reinforce the brand of BWDSB.
- g) There may be circumstances where a school, department, or board-related social media account should only be used to broadcast out information. In these situations, account notification tool settings should be set (where at all possible) such that messages are only broadcast out and any replies received are not viewable by the general public.

2.4.2 Maintenance

- a) Account administrators/webmasters will be designated by the school principal or applicable supervisor.
- b) Account administrators/webmasters are responsible for updating and monitoring their own accounts/sites and will provide timely update reports to their principal or supervisor, as required.
- c) In order to maintain relevance and readership, social media accounts should be updated three to five times at a weekly minimum.

2.5 Terms of Use

2.5.1 Rules of Engagement (adapted from Thames Valley District School Board *Corporate Guide to Social Media*)

Any approved BWDSB social media accounts enabling public comments and posts should provide a link to the following rules of conduct in a visible location on the social media site, if possible. This information will be posted on the board website:

Bluewater District School Board does not allow comments or posts on its social media sites that are obscene, discriminatory, racist, hateful, abusive, or defamatory to any individual or organization, or would contravene policy BP 7520-D "Human Rights", and the board reserves the right to block or remove followers that violate these terms.

Bluewater District School Board social media sites are not for communication about personal or private matters. Comments involving personal issues with the

board, a school or staff member will be removed. Additionally, personal requests for information/queries should be made by phoning/emailing the school or board and not through this forum.

Contact information for the board and its schools is available through the BWDSB website at www.bwdsb.on.ca.

Bluewater District School Board reserves the right to remove comments or posts that are considered:

- Spam
- Advertising of promotion of services, products, or political organizations
- Irrelevant to the topic or disruptive
- Advocating illegal activity
- Infringement of copyrights or trademarks
- Violation of any Bluewater District School Board policies
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Private, personal information published without consent

Participants use social media at their own risk, taking personal responsibility for all comments and information provided. It is recommended that participants/users regularly check their security settings.

The public comments and posts expressed on Bluewater District School Board social media sites do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of Bluewater District School Board or its employees.

Bluewater District School Board is not liable for content posted by any user or subscriber to its social media sites.

2.5.2 Privacy Implications and Posting of Information to a Web or Social Media Site – Best Practices

- a) General information is not subject to the privacy provisions of the MFIPPA and may be posted to a social media account/site. Examples of general information are:
 - i. School location
 - ii. School history
 - iii. School profile
 - iv. School code of conduct, including school dress code
 - v. School calendar and holidays
 - vi. Photographs of school building
 - vii. Homework assignments and deadlines
 - viii. Course descriptions
 - ix. School email addresses that do not identify individuals
 - x. Staff lists that include names, title, contact information, department, and grade taught
 - xi. Names of staff responsible for specific extracurricular activities
- b) Generally, personal information should not be posted to a social media account/site. If a decision is made to post personal information, informed written consent of the individual must be obtained prior to posting the personal information.
- c) Examples of personal information retained at schools that should never be posted include:
 - i. Student's report card and academic transcript
 - ii. Student's Ontario Student Record (OSR)

- iii. Student's name (see exceptions in section d) below), telephone number, home address, personal e-mail address
- iv. Parent's name, telephone number, home address, personal email address
- d) Examples of personal information retained at schools that may be appropriate to post, provided that the individual(s) have given informed written consent include:
 - i. Photographs of students (individual and/or group)
 - ii. Videos of students (individual and/or group)
 - iii. Students' work, such as essays, projects, etc.
 - iv. Names of students participating in learning or extracurricular activities
 - v. Names of student award-winners/prize-winners
- e) Schools must include a copyright notice to others regarding the use of staff or student materials
- f) Photos of students and students' work (e.g., art, writing) may be used on board or school websites if AF 6810 "Student Identification Consent and Website Consent Form" has been completed. Full names of students must not be used without prior consent.

2.6 Copyright

- 2.6.1 Please refer to Administrative Procedure AP 2320-D "Copyright" for specific guidelines regarding allowable uses of copyrighted material as it relates to education.
- 2.6.2 It is illegal to use work (electronic or hard copy version of graphics, video, audio, text) created by others without permission from the creator.
- 2.6.3 Copyrighted materials may not be reproduced or transmitted using board equipment, including its web server, without permission.
- 2.6.4 Webmasters must comply with copyright regulations.
- 2.6.5 Students retain copyright on materials they create that are posted on the web.
- 2.6.6 Employees may retain copyright when consistent with Bluewater District School Board policies and procedures.
- 2.6.7 Schools must obtain permission from owners of copyright when including material created by others.
- 2.6.8 Schools must include a copyright notice to others regarding the use of staff or student materials.