

Policy Title	Communications		
Date of Issue	May 17, 2011	Related Procedure	AP 1602-D ; AP 1603-D ; AP 1604-D ; AP 1605-D ; AP 1607-D ; AP 1608-D ; AP 1609-D ; AP 1610-D ; AP 2860-D ;
Revision Dates	February 21, 2012 (rev. Rationale-Strategic Plan); September 22, 2015; April 19, 2022	Related Forms	AF 1604
Review Date	April 1, 2027	Originator	Board of Trustees
References			
Ontario Regulation 612/00; Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA); Bill 177 "Student Achievement and School Board Governance" Act; Employment Standards Act; Education Act; Applicable Bluewater District School Board Collective Agreements; Human Rights Code; BP/AP 7520-D "Human Rights"; BP/AP 1606-D "Consultation"			

1.0 RATIONALE

- 1.1 Bluewater District School Board policies will support and provide direction necessary to achieve the board's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan priorities.
- 1.2 Bluewater District School Board believes in inviting open communications and listening attentively to all constructive suggestions to improve our educational service consistent with role descriptions for staff and trustees.
- 1.3 Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) recognizes the advantages of centrally supporting the development of corporate, department, and school-based social media accounts/sites through a process of open communication, and transparency.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 Bluewater District School Board is committed to enabling and fostering a school community that supports student learning using proactive and transparent communication.
- 2.2 All Bluewater District School Board communications are to be based on the following general principles:
 - i. Information is provided openly, honestly, and with integrity.
 - ii. Communications are provided in a timely manner to ensure prompt access to relevant information.
 - iii. Release of information complies with legislation including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Education Act.
 - iv. Communications are prepared with sensitivity to language and tone and are appropriate to the circumstances and audience.

3.0 SYSTEM EXPECTATIONS

- 3.1 Trustees and staff members share the goal of supporting students and parents in achieving the most positive learning environment in the schools of Bluewater District School Board.
- 3.2 Trustees and staff members share the goal of fostering a climate of respect and trust which focuses on working towards mutually acceptable solutions.
- 3.3 Staff members are committed to providing trustees with accurate, timely information on issues they have raised personally, or to respond to concerns they may have about individual situations in schools, with parents, students, community members, or with administrative issues. Administrative procedure AP 1603-D "Communications – Trustee/Administration" will be used to inform this process.
- 3.4 Parent/guardian and/or Community concerns will be addressed following the processes noted in AP 1604-D "Communications – Addressing Parent/Community Concerns".
- 3.5 Trustees and staff members share the joint responsibility for communicating in a way that reflects the expectations of this policy, along with the board's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan priorities to families and members of the community.
- 3.6 Individual schools are encouraged to implement their own standard processes for the communication of information at the school level, such as communication between teachers and parents and between administration and school councils. It is expected that these processes will incorporate the system expectations outlined within this policy and reflect the board's Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan priorities.
- 3.7 All communication on behalf of Bluewater District School Board must be reflective of the board's commitment to fairness, equity, and inclusive education as essential principles of our school system.
- 3.8 Effective communication involves a continuous reciprocal exchange of information between trustees, staff members, and stakeholders. Strategies will be in place to encourage input from the school community and stakeholders on critical board matters, as described in BP and AP 1606-D "Consultation".
- 3.9 Social media accounts/sites, when created and used based on standards set out by the board, are effective tools to highlight initiatives and events, and make important information readily available across the board. Administrative procedure AP 1608-D "Social Media and Web Publishing" provides the board's minimum standards and expectations.
- 3.10 Personal information will not be used or disclosed in any form of communication for purposes other than those for which it was collected except with the consent of the individual or as required by law.