

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Category:

Human Resources

Effective:

August, 2024

Appendix A

School- Administered Social Media Accounts

Schools may use social media to share school or public-service related content.

- a) School social media should be intended for families and the public. In light of concerns over the impact of social media and screen time on young people’s mental wellness, schools will not direct social media content towards students.
- b) All school-administered social media accounts, profiles, and pages should be considered official school communication, representing the school and district, and given proper consideration as a tool in a broader communication strategy. This includes schools’ use of social media on behalf of school councils, clubs, teams, events, etc.
- c) Social media platforms evolve quickly, and every platform does not align with the district’s overall communication strategy. Facebook, Instagram, X, and YouTube are the recommended platforms to share information and host content. ASD-W does not permit the use of other school-administered social media accounts, including but not limited to TikTok and Snapchat.
- d) All new Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube accounts or pages must be first approved by the Director of Communications, who will advise on the established naming conventions and templates as appropriate. See Appendix A for best practices.
- e) Log-in information and passwords to social media accounts must be provided to the Director of Communications, and it is the responsibility of both parties to ensure user IDs and passwords are shared and stored in a secure manner. This is to prevent inactive or inaccessible accounts and pages.
- f) Only staff may have administrative access to social media accounts. Students and parents/guardians are not to be granted access to manage or post on behalf of the accounts. While management may be delegated, all posted or published content to school social media accounts is ultimately the responsibility of the principal.
- g) Schools may not disclose any confidential or personal information about students, including photographs or videos, without the informed consent of the student or their parents/guardians.
- h) Social media platforms shall be kept up to date, with accurate information. Inactive accounts shall be discontinued/deleted.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**Category: Human Resources****Effective: August, 2024****Appendix B****Electronic Communications for Teaching and Learning**

- a. Teachers are encouraged to utilize Microsoft Teams or D2L as their learning management system, where students can access homework, assignments, feedback, and assessment or connect virtually.
- b. The use of third-party websites for learning management and activities, such as ClassDojo, Weebly, Wix, or other blog, file sharing, social media sites or virtual classroom platform, is not permitted.
- c. Staff who choose to use social media in a professional capacity, e.g. for PL or to showcase their work, must create a professional page, distinct from their personal pages/profiles. Posts should be limited to professional matters. Students are not your intended audience, and these pages are not to be used for teaching students. Student media release forms do not apply here, and information about students, including photographs or videos, may not be shared on personal or professional pages.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Appendix C

Communications with Students

- a. Provide clear expectations to students of how and when you will communicate. It is the student's responsibility to check for communications in a consistent and timely manner and to use the designated communication tool. Consider if all students have access to the required technology, for example device or mobile data, and adjust accordingly.
- b. Maintain professional boundaries by communicating with students only at appropriate hours of the day. If you would not deem it appropriate to make a phone call at that hour, it is not appropriate to communicate electronically at that time.
- c. Do not use personal email accounts or profiles to communicate with students. Use supported provincial tools for online communications with students and parents/ guardians, such as your nbed email, SchoolMessenger, or Microsoft Teams. For those without an nbed email account, such as volunteers and coaches, broadcast-only apps and safe-messaging apps, such as Remind and TeamSnap may be used with approval from the principal.
- d. Do not text message students using your personal device. If you wish to use text messaging as a means of communication with your students, use the Text function in SchoolMessenger.
- e. All communication with students should be courteous, respectful and appropriate, and should pertain to school or school-activity related matters. Examples of inappropriate interactions include:
 - exchanges that could be interpreted as personal versus professional
 - exchanges that could be interpreted as intimate or sexually suggestive
 - inviting students to meet privately or without a valid educational reason
 - sharing personal email or social networking contact information
 - using informal and unprofessional language, such as profanity
 - discussing other students, parents/guardians or colleagues
 - sharing content, links or comments that might be considered offensive or inconsistent with professional or ethical standards
 - instructing students to delete correspondence between adult and student.
- f. Do not use social media with any student with whom you solely have, or have had, a staff/pupil relationship. This includes former pupils until they reach the age of 19 and are completely disconnected from the school system as a student.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**Category:****Human Resources****Effective:**

August, 2024

Appendix D**Communications with Parents/Guardians**

It is recommended that communication with parents/guardians occurs face-to-face, over the phone, or virtually via Teams, SchoolMessenger, or your nbed email account. It is recognized that there are situations where other communication methods are accepted when established and agreed upon by both parties for convenience and accessibility. All communication with parents/guardians must be formal, courteous, and respectful and should pertain to school related matters. Employees should consider the privacy implications of accepting 'friend' or 'follower' requests from parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are expected to take responsibility for respectful and positive interactions online and through all modes of communications when interacting with or posting about schools, employees, or the district.

ASD-W adheres to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECDs) [Policy 703, Positive Learning and Working Environment](#), to ensure students and staff are safe and comfortable daily in their schools and offices. The requirement for a safe and positive learning and working environment extends online. Parents/guardians are expected to address questions, issues, or concerns directly with their school administration (Principal, Vice-Principal). If a satisfactory result cannot be achieved at the school level, parents must then address their questions, issues or concerns directly with the Director of Schools responsible for their area. Issues, concerns, questions, etc., posted online will not be addressed or responded to.

Inappropriate, hateful, or threatening online engagement of a school, employee, or the district by a parent/guardian, may result in a meeting with the school and/or district officials. In certain circumstances, such behaviour may result in an individual being excluded from school property, school activities, or any other school-related functions, for a period to be determined by school and district officials. In addition, depending on the nature of the communication, school or district officials may engage law enforcement.

- a. Comments or opinions expressed on any of the ASD-W social media sites from members of the public are those of the respective contributors only. The views expressed by outside contributors do not necessarily represent the views of the school district.
- b. ASD-W follows/likes individuals and organizations relevant to the school district's business.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**Category:****Human Resources****Effective:**

August, 2024

Appendix E**ASD-W Social Media Best Practices**

Please note that social media platforms are constantly updating and changing to fit the needs of their users and trends. This document will be updated periodically to reflect current practices. Properly managing a social media account is a significant undertaking with responsibilities and accountability. Therefore, ASD-W expects anyone who chooses to be a school account administrator to adhere to these guidelines. If you have any questions regarding your school social media presence, please reach out to the Director of Communications.

Creating a New School Social Media Page

School social media is not a requirement and may not be a good fit for every school. Before creating a new social media page or profile, you should consider:

- How successful are you at reaching your families through other channels? Is there a need? More channels are not always better.
- Is your goal to reach students? School social media should be intended for families and the public only and not students. In light of concerns over the impact of social media and screen time on students' mental wellness, schools will not contribute to unhealthy relationships with technology.
- Do you have a staff member with the time and desire to maintain the page or profile? Key to success with social media is consistent posting and monitoring.
- Are there already other pages that may be confused with an official school page? It may be a good idea to create an "official" school page to claim your space on the internet. However, if you already have other "official" school pages, for e.g. for athletics, theatre, committees, your content and audience may be diluted, and it is usually better to broaden the scope of a single, existing channel.

Any new social media account in ASD-W must first be approved by the Director of Communications. This includes creating any accounts associated with the school district, including but not limited to: clubs or groups (student or faculty-led), athletic teams, events, etc. This requirement does not apply to Home and School Groups or Parent School Support Committees (PSSCs). Contact the Director of Communications to discuss your need for a new page/account. Typically, this ask will come from the school principal.

In the case of a Facebook page, if approved, ensure that:

- You create a 'page', not a 'group'
- Accounts are created using nbed email accounts
- The name of the page is the name of your school (e.g. not the *Black Kats*, or *LHHS*)
- Reviews are turned off
- The ability for the public to post on your page is turned off
- Messenger is turned off

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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Human Resources

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August, 2024

Once your social media account or page is created, you must register the credentials, including the account manager's username, password, name, and contact information, with the Director of Communications. This is to prevent inactive or inaccessible accounts and pages.

Maintaining a School Social Media Page

Account Management

- a. All school-administered social media accounts, profiles, and pages (including accounts on behalf of school councils, clubs, teams, events, etc.) are considered official school communication, representing the school and district. They are distinct from an employee's personal pages/profiles/accounts.
- b. Limit the number of staff members who post to your account; however, accounts should have at least two staff members as admins. Students and parents/guardians are not to be granted access to manage or post on behalf of the account. While management may be delegated, all posted or published content to school social media accounts is ultimately the responsibility of the principal.
- c. Social media accounts must be continually updated and monitored to respond to posts, comments, questions, or mentions and to monitor any inappropriate behaviour. Accounts that have been inactive for more than six months should be deactivated and deleted.
- d. While public posting should be turned off of your accounts, comments or replies on your posts are often automatically enabled. Generally, it is important not to censor discussions unless contributions are defamatory, offensive, obscene, or spam. These should be hidden, not removed, to ensure they stay on the public record.
- e. If a user is being aggressive or harassing, first warn them about their content before making further decisions to block their access to your accounts.
- f. School accounts are property of ASD-W. If the creator or administrator of a page leaves their role, they must ensure that login and password information, as well as responsibility for the page, is transferred to the new page owner, and that information is also shared with the Director of Communications.
- g. Following the district, other schools, and local community organizations is a great way to find and share content. Who your account follows is visible to your audience so consider the optics of who you follow, for example news organizations, political parties, social causes, etc.
- h. Do not engage with complaints or concerns online. Instead, direct the user to contact the school off-line. If a member of the public engages the school on a page other than the

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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school's, such as their own page or in a group, do not respond. If the comment warrants addressing, the principal may wish to contact the user off-line, let them know you have been made aware that they have shared concerns on-line, and discuss their issue privately.

- i. Teachers are to utilize a district-approved learning management platform for teaching and learning, not a social media account.

Posting

- a. Be present and responsive. Having an official account requires diligence and constant upkeep. The frequency of updates and posting varies for each channel. Therefore, using a schedule or editorial calendar for posts may be helpful. Ideally, posts are daily. Examples of posts are news, events, announcements, information updates, projects, recognition, and public-safety or service information.
- b. Make sure all posts, articles, or comments align with the districts' and schools' values and branding. If you have to question whether or not it does, do not post it.
- c. Always ask, "What do we want to achieve?". Are you looking to increase awareness about your issue? Is there a call to action? Having a goal in mind or a purpose will help you create a post that is more meaningful to your audience.
- d. Use images, graphics, and videos to tell a story wherever possible. Visual content is more engaging and can often tell the story quicker and more succinctly than words alone.
- e. Be consistent in what information you post. If your audience comes to expect certain information, e.g. local bus delays or athletic game schedules, it is essential that it is reliably shared. Consider what information you will share before committing to it. This also means consistency in the type of content shared. If your page frequently features certain teams and clubs, but not others, inequity will be perceived.
- f. Don't post sensitive, private, or confidential school information, unannounced policy changes, or unannounced school news.
- g. School accounts must be impartial. Ensure your posts do not enter into public debate or create a real or perceived conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists if you post information not directly relevant or aligned with your school community audience, such as an editorial or promotion for a personal interest.
- h. Before sharing or re-tweeting content created by others, ensure it is accurate and reflects the values of the school and district. Schools will often be asked by outside groups to share their content. This should be done discriminately, as the school is then responsible for that content, including any required corrections or inaccuracies. Third-party sharing should only be done if it clearly adds value to your school community.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**Category:****Human Resources****Effective:**

August, 2024

Emergency & Crisis Communications

As an emergency or crisis unfolds, social media can:

- Reach a broad number of people and organizations
- Communicate alerts, warnings, and vital information
- Contribute to public awareness
- Support rumour management and correction of misinformation
- Help connect the community after an emergency to help the recovery effort
- Provide a way for the community to express and offer support to its members

Per the ASD-W Crisis and Emergency Response Plans, the District Communications Director will lead the preparing, posting, and directing of messages for social media during a serious situation, such as a lockdown or hold and secure. Messaging will be provided to schools to share on their social media accounts, if and as appropriate.