



POLICY NO. ASD-W-250-23

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Category: Human Resources **Effective:** August, 2024

Application

This policy applies to all individuals who fulfill a job or role in ASD-W. This includes, but is not limited to, all employees, volunteers, coaches, and contracted employees. The policy applies at all times when an individual represents ASD-W in an official or unofficial capacity and supports the [ASD-W Professional Conduct Policy 250-16](#) and [AD-2913-Respectful Work Place](#).

Policy Statement

Electronic communication tools, such as texting, messaging apps, and social media are part of an evolving communication landscape. Anglophone School District West recognizes the importance of providing a clear understanding of the acceptable use of such communications tools. This policy has been developed to support the following principles:

- Even on their own time, employees may be identified as working for or representing their school or the school district. Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of communication is vital to maintaining the public trust and appropriate professional relationships.
- Considering concerns over the impact of social media and screen time on students' mental wellness, schools will not contribute to unhealthy relationships with technology.
- Outside of school hours, employees and students are entitled to personal time, and teachers should set healthy limits to communication outside of class.

Rationale

When communicating online or via text, the lines between public and private, personal, and professional, can become blurred. The norms for usage, such as language, formality, and timeliness, differ from face-to-face communication, phone conversations, and virtual meetings. The possibility of misunderstandings, misdirected messages, and crossing appropriate boundaries increases when texting or using social media.

All communication on NBED devices and accounts are government assets/records and must be treated accordingly. The following has been established to mitigate both the employees' and the school district's exposure to risk and help staff understand their professional responsibilities and boundaries when using electronic communications.

Purpose

- To support effective communication amongst staff and with families and students.
- To inform staff and students to prevent issues that may arise from unclear boundaries.

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- To model acceptable, positive, and respectful behaviour for students.
- To promote a safe and supportive learning and working environment for students and staff in adherence to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECDs) [Policy 703](#), *Positive Learning and Working Environment*.

Definitions

Electronic communication is any technology-mediated communication that allows users to communicate or exchange messages or content with others, either individually or in groups. Examples include, but are not limited to; email, texting, WhatsApp, Messenger, video games, Facebook, X, Instagram, YouTube, Discord, Reddit, Twitch, TikTok, Snapchat, and Threads.

Procedures

1. Employee Use of Electronic Communications

- a. As role models in a position of trust for learners and a representative of the school district, you must ensure that your use of electronic communication, even on your personal time is appropriate.
- b. Do not represent yourself online as speaking on behalf of the school district, your school, or your colleagues, unless authorized to do so.
- c. Do not criticize or disparage online, other district employees, the School District, the education system, or government as a whole. Use appropriate channels to provide constructive feedback if required.
- d. Refrain from inappropriate, heated, or other professionally unacceptable postings. Consider whether any content may reflect poorly on you, your school, the School District or our education system before you post it. Retweets, likes, upvotes, favorites, etc. are perceived as endorsements and these types of interactions must also be done responsibly.
- e. Do not disclose any confidential or personal information about staff, students, or their parents/guardians in online communications. This includes not posting photographs or videos of students without their guardian’s consent.
- f. Online activities must not interfere with the performance of your job or your effectiveness as an employee of the School District. While at work, personal use of devices should be kept to a minimum.
- g. Be aware that communication of work-related matters or information is subject to the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, regardless of the electronic device (i.e. personal or work device) or platform used.

Breach of Policy

Appropriate measures will be taken to address any breach of this policy, including use of the formal disciplinary process.

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References

- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [Policy 701 – Policy for the Protection of Pupils](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [Policy 703 – Positive Learning and Working Environment](#)
- ASD-W Professional Conduct [Policy 250-16](#).
- Province of New Brunswick [AD-2913 – Respectful Workplace](#)
- [RTIPPA – Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [PHIPAA - Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act](#)
- [New Brunswick Education Act & Regulations](#)
- [GNB Social Media Guidelines 2022](#)
- Province of New Brunswick [Public Service Values and Conduct Guide](#)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development [Policy 311 – Information and Communications Technologies \(ICT\) Use](#)

Appendices

- Appendix A – School Administered Social Media Accounts
- Appendix B – Electronic Communications for Teaching and Learning
- Appendix C – Communications with Students
- Appendix D – Communications with Parents/Guardians
- Appendix E – Social Media Best Practices