

**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SECTION B: ADMINISTRATION**

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS	PROCEDURE
EFFECTIVE: 2017 04 25	

APPLICABLE REFERENCES:

Legislation

- Education Act, Ontario: s266; s171(38)
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA): [MFIPPA](#)
- Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA): [PHIPA](#)

Other Related

- Information and Privacy Commission of Ontario: <http://www.ipc.on.ca/>
- Ontario College of Teachers Professional Advisory: [Use of Electronic Communications and Social Media](#)
- Council of Ministers of Education, Canada: [Copyright Matters](#)
- Board Policies and Procedures:
 - [Equity and Inclusive Education](#)
 - [Copyright: Fair Dealings Guidelines](#)
 - [Employment Expectations of Academic Staff](#)
 - [Employment Expectations of Non-Academic Staff](#)
 - [Freedom From Harassment and Discrimination](#)
 - [Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)
 - [Workplace Violence Prevention](#)
 - [Responsible Use of Technology](#)
 - Privacy

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

The Board recognizes the important role of social media and electronic communications in the conduct of its business and in the learning environment and that its appropriate use should be available to staff and students.

1.0 Responsibility

- 1.1 The Treasurer of the Board will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and procedure.
- 1.2 Senior Administration, Managers and Principals will be responsible for communicating this procedure to all individuals involved in the use of social media and electronic communications.

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2.0 Expectations

2.1 Superintendents, Principals and Managers will:

2.1.1 Ensure that staff are aware of these procedures.

2.1.2 Determine appropriate action, corrective and disciplinary measures to address staff and student violations of these procedures in consultation with senior management, as necessary, on a case-by-case basis for situations in which staff and students are not in compliance.

2.2 Principals and Managers (or Designates) will:

2.2.1 Ensure that signed consent (Appendix A) is on file and tracked in the school office for students names, photos, class work, etc. to be used on Board website and social media sites.

2.2.2 Remind parents/guardians, through the school newsletter that once consent is granted, it will remain in effect throughout the child's school career; however, the parent/guardian or student age 18 years or older, may revoke consent at any time by contacting the school office.

2.2.3 Coordinate and manage electronic communications and social media technologies usage and content creation within their school or department in accordance with all applicable Board policies and procedures.

2.2.4 Develop an understanding amongst staff for the acceptable use of electronic communications and social media technologies.

2.3 Teachers will:

2.3.1 Teach and monitor proper techniques and standards for use of information technology and for guiding student access to electronic communication and social media sites in alignment with digital citizenship best practices.

2.3.2 Advise students that misuse of electronic communications and social media technologies and resources may result in disciplinary or legal action. Particular concerns include issues of privacy, copyright infringement, electronic communication etiquette (Appendix B) and cyber bullying.

2.3.3 Manage student use of electronic communications and social media technologies and resources within their assigned teaching areas.

2.3.4 Understand and follow the Board's Privacy Policy and related procedures.

2.3.5 Obtain consent for student activity or posting of their work outside of the Board's Google or Microsoft Office 365 Domain on the Internet in a public forum, as the information is outside of the Board's custody and control once it is on the web. A template letter for use of social media in the classroom is provided in Appendix C and should be modified to suit the specific needs of the activity or work.

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- 2.3.6 Conduct an evaluation of an application (APP) prior to employing it for student use. This process will include a thorough review of the APP's Privacy Policy and will consider the following:
- Determine if the "APP" shares information with 3rd party services; if yes, the "APP" cannot be used.
 - Determine if the "APP" requests access to personal information; if yes, parental consent for student use is legislatively required.
- 2.3.7 Consult with the school principal (or vice principal) as necessary, and be guided by the Board policies and procedures and/or the School Code of Conduct when applying sanctions for misuse and/or illegal use of the Board's computing and information technology facilities and resources.
- 2.3.8 Use electronic communications and social networking tools with the appropriate understandings of the effective educational use of these tools and avoid the use of personal accounts when engaging with students.
- 2.3.9 Use electronic communication and social networking tools with parents and colleagues for professional purposes only using Board affiliated accounts.
- 2.3.10 Refer to the Ontario College of Teachers Professional Advisory on the [*Use of Electronic Communications and Social Media*](#), for information and guidance.
- 2.4 Students:
- 2.4.1 Are expected to be a good digital citizens, by effectively using social media, electronic communications and other digital technology, to participate responsibly in classroom, school, social and civic activities.
- 2.5 Guiding Principles for All Users
- 2.5.1 Do not use Board technology and network services for purposes that cause, directly or indirectly, excessive strain on any computing facilities, which could disrupt other users or compromise the functionality of the system.
- 2.5.2 The Board's technology resources support student learning and its business functions. Users will interact knowledgeably and responsibly ensuring that the use of electronic communications and social media provides a safe and nurturing environment for learning and working. Personal use is not a priority.
- 2.5.3 The use of Board-owned technology, resources, systems and networks is a privilege and any breach or violation of the Responsible Use of Technology, School Code of Conduct or other Board policy may result in restricted network access, loss of network access, liability for the cost of remediation and/or disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion in matters concerning students. Legal action including, but not limited to, criminal prosecution under the appropriate provincial and federal laws, may be initiated.
- 2.5.4 All users must familiarize themselves, prior to posting publicly, with the settings of the social media, website and web-based forums they intend to use and must ensure that an appropriate level of privacy can be maintained and that the

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intended use of the technology complies with the Board's expectations and policies prior to proceeding in their use.

- 2.5.5 All users must be aware of data protection requirements and must ensure that confidential and personal information remains protected and is not posted or shared through website postings or social media. The posting of first names only is highly recommended.
- 2.5.6 The Board assumes no liability for following items residing beyond its domain and is NOT responsible for the: appropriateness of Internet content, accuracy or reliability of information located on the Internet, loss, damage or inaccessibility of information due to technical or other difficulties or costs or losses incurred by users; or copyright violation.
- 2.5.7 The Board retains ownership, control and copyright over any work-related items created, composed or otherwise developed using Board technology resources; unless specifically waived or transferred in writing. All requests for waivers or transfer of ownership should be made through an employee's immediate supervisor or a student's principal, who will then forward the request to the appropriate Superintendent of Education for approval.
- 2.5.8 Be professional, respectful and careful about what you say to and about others. Consider the tone of your postings. Email and social media communication is easily forwarded and shared. Content on social media and websites could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Carefully consider all comments and responses carefully in light of how they would reflect upon you and the Board.
- 2.5.9 When posting information or contributing to social media, ensure that it is accurate and based in fact. Inappropriate or inaccurate posts or comments which are damaging to a person's reputation could result in legal action.
- 2.5.10 Be aware that there is no such thing as privacy on the Internet. Search engines can produce posts years after they were created - even if they have been deleted.
- 2.5.11 Always be aware that misinterpretation of your message/social media post may occur. What was meant as a casual or humorous message can be interpreted in a manner other than intended, because body language and tone are missing from the message. Without face-to-face communications, what you intended as a harmless comment could be considered offensive.
- 2.5.12 All users should regularly monitor any content posted to their social media accounts and remove any content that is not appropriate. (See definition for *Appropriate Use*).

3.0 Additional Information

- 3.1 The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education, consistent with our Catholic teachings, which value and promote human rights and social justice in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations and practices.

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4.0 Definitions

Appropriate Use – Network users will conduct themselves in an ethical manner and are not permitted to transmit, request, submit or publish any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, pornographic, threatening, harassing, offensive, racist, illegal or any other inappropriate material, regardless of ownership of the equipment or network being used. All network users will ensure that all communication is in compliance with privacy legislation, and that all records in the custody and control of the Board that contain personal information that pertains to a student or other individual will be held in strict confidence. Network users must respect copyright laws and licensing requirements that protect software owners, artists, writers, and other creators.

Personal Information (MFIPPA: s 2.1) - Recorded information about an identifiable individual, including:

- a) Information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital or family status of the individual,
- b) Information relating to the education or the medical, psychiatric, psychological, criminal or employment history of the individual or information relating to financial transactions in which the individual has been involved,
- c) Any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual,
- d) The address, telephone number, fingerprints or blood type of the individual,
- e) The personal opinions or view of the individual except if they relate to another individual,
- f) Correspondence sent to an institution by the individual that is implicitly or explicitly of a private or confidential nature, and replies to that correspondence that would reveal the contents of the original correspondence,
- g) The views or opinions of another individual about the individual, and
- h) The individual's name if it appears with other personal information relating to the individual or where the disclosure of the name would reveal other personal information about the individual.

Social Media and Electronic Communications – Computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange user-generated information, ideas and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. Examples include, but are not limited to, email, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Blogger, MySpace, Instant Messaging and posting on video or picture-sharing sites and elsewhere on the internet.

Users – Administrators, academic and support staff, students, parents, volunteers, visitors and persons associated in any way with the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, in relation to all Board computer equipment and networks and/or personal devices, while on or off Board property.

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'APPENDIX A'

**CONSENT FORM
USE OF STUDENT PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Please contact your school Principal should you have any questions or concerns in regards to this consent form.

This consent remains in effect until the school is informed otherwise by the parent/guardian/ adult student (18 years or older).

It is important that all individuals are respectful of the privacy rights of anyone captured in their picture and/or recording and to only publish the picture and/or recording of others with consent from the student's parent/guardian, or consent from the adult student/individual.

On this consent form the Board is seeking your approval to share pictures and recordings to celebrate your child's accomplishments in the classroom and school. This includes student projects, achievements, activities, plays, athletics and presentations being photographed or recorded.

Students participating in extra-curricular activities or events where the public attends (i.e. community events, music festivals, athletic school games) may be photographed and/or reported on by the media or the general public and may result in photos or recordings being posted on social media. If photography or video recording is permitted at such events, it is generally not possible for the school or Board to control the use of such recordings.

Instructions: Please mark an **X** to indicate your response for each of the categories below. The form must be signed and returned to the school regardless of your response.

Personal Information Consent Category:			Consent Given	Consent Not Given
A	On School Premises	Your child's picture and recordings to be posted within the school in classrooms, library, school halls or for other special occasions within the school related to activities or events.		
B	Traditional School Pictures	Your child's picture to be included and published in school class pictures, school team pictures and in the school year-book pages.		
C	School Board Social Media	Your child's picture and recordings to be shared through social media within the school, classroom and Board, including but not limited to, websites, newsletters, Facebook and Twitter that may be publicly accessible.		
D	External Social Media & Publications	Where the Board has invited the media to photograph, interview or record (audio or video) your child for reporting good news stories in newspapers, on radio, on television and/or on media websites for school related events.		

Your child's personal information is used for educational or consistent purposes in accordance with the *Education Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("MFIPPA"). The *Education Act* authorizes the Board to collect personal information for planning and delivering educational programs and services as well as reporting to the Ministry of Education as required. MFIPPA provides direction for the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

We encourage parents/guardians to communicate to your child(ren) where consent is not given so that they are aware that they will be excluded from pictures or recordings to be posted.

Student Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian/Adult Student (over 18) Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian/Adult Student (over 18) Signature

Date

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'APPENDIX B'

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ETIQUETTE

Be concise: Keep messages as brief as possible. Remember that reading a digital message can be harder for some than reading printed messages and that reading a lengthy message can be discouraging and not read thoroughly.

Completeness: Ensure your response answers all questions asked and pre-empts further questions. Incompleteness requires additional correspondence, which may cause considerable frustration.

Mind your grammar: Ensure that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate; otherwise, your message may be perceived as unprofessional, be difficult to read or may be misunderstood.

Formatting: Structure and layout of the message is important. Use short paragraphs with blank lines between each paragraph. If making points, mark each one separately to be easily identifiable and comprehended. Do not rely on formats or options in your email program, some recipients may not use the same program or have the same options available to them.

Limit use of High Priority: If you overuse this function, eventually your messages will not be perceived as 'high priority'.

Capitals: Do not use CAPITALS for your entire email. Recipients perceive this as being shouted at. Using capitals should be limited to emphasize one or a few words.

Replying: You should include the original email in your reply. Use 'Reply' as opposed to 'New Message'. This makes it much easier for the reader to reply to you.

Read before you click 'Send': Re-reading your email will provide you the opportunity to check your spelling, grammar, formatting and clarity of the message. Read it from the perspective of the recipient and edit the message to add clarity if needed.

Consider 'Bcc': If you are sending an email to a large group of recipients, consider whether it is appropriate to share all of their email addresses with that list. It may be more appropriate to send the message using the Blind Carbon Copy (Bcc) option to avoid sharing out all email addresses in the distribution list to all recipients.

Abbreviations & Emoticons: Avoid using abbreviations that the recipient may not be aware of or that would be considered electronic slang (BTW, LOL). Generally, neither electronic slang nor emoticons are appropriate in formal or professional communications.

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'APPENDIX C'

TEMPLATE LETTER: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM
(on school letterhead)

[Date]

Dear Families,

This [school year/month], I will be introducing students to an exciting form of online written communication—[SCCDSB.net Google Platform/Twitter/blogging/wikis/etc]. The purpose of this letter is to share some information about [SCCDSB.net Google Platform/Twitter/blogging/wikis/etc] and to let you know how our class will use [this/these social media platform(s)].

[SCCDSB.net] is a closed environment for teacher-to-student and student to student collaboration. Despite being on the Internet, the environment is not open to everyone. Teachers select who is able to access the learning resources posted on the classroom or student drive or site.]

[Twitter/Facebook] is a social media network that is increasingly being used in education as a learning tool. It is widely used by teachers around the world for educational purposes and helps learning communities, students and parents build meaningful connections. These forums are on the external Internet and are open to outside users.]

[A **classroom blog** is a discussion or information website where permitted users add entries (posts), which are displayed in chronological order. Students will have the opportunity to write posts on a variety of topics being covered in the classroom. These writing exercises are opportunities for students to reflect upon lessons, practice their writing and critical thinking skills, and to see their learning come alive online.]

In our class, we will be using [XXX] to share some of the exciting activities we learn. Posts will be written by students and monitored and sent by the teacher. Those who follow us—[parents, other classes, teachers, community members]—will be able to read [and comment] on our posts.

A very important aspect of using social media in the classroom is digital citizenship as it relates to responsible and safe online use. Our class has discussed this in terms of our online behaviour. As a class, we agree that all of our social media posts must:

- use student first names only
- not reveal personal information about the writer or anyone else in the class
- use appropriate language
- be kind and respectful
- only include photos/videos where signed consent is on file

If you are interested in following us on [insert URL or instructions for following, e.g. Twitter, our username is @OurClass]. We hope you will enjoy reading and responding to our posts as they occur throughout the year. We are excited to give you a virtual window into our classroom!

Sincerely,
[Teacher's Name]