

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Category	Human Resources		
Adopted	October, 2021		

Policy Statement

Electronic communications, such as texting, messaging apps, and social media are part of an evolving communication landscape. Anglophone South School District recognizes the importance of providing employees with a clear understanding of the acceptable use of electronic communication. 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, technology-related or not, is vital to maintaining the public trust and appropriate professional relationships.
- Face-to-face, at school is the preferred way to communicate and connect with students. In light of concerns over the impact of social media on students’ mental wellness, schools will not contribute to unhealthy relationships with technology.
- ASD-S values and promotes a healthy work-life balance. Outside of school hours, teachers and students are entitled to personal time, and should set healthy limits to communication outside of class.

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 emails or face-to-face communication. The possibility of misunderstandings, mis-directed messages, and crossing appropriate boundaries, among other issues, increases when texting or using social media and has the potential to put the reputation of employees and the School District at risk.

The following has been established to mitigate both the employees’ and School District’s exposure to risk and to help staff understand their professional boundaries and responsibilities in the appropriate use of electronic communications.

This policy applies to all individuals who fulfill a job or role in ASD-S. This includes, but is not limited to all employees, volunteers, DEC members, coaches, contracted employees, interns, tutors, and Co-Operative Education students. The policy applies at all times, when an individual represents ASD-S in an official or unofficial capacity and supports the ASD-S Professional Code of Conduct policy – Policy 232.

Social Media and Electronic Communications**Procedures****Electronic Communication****Definition**

Electronic communication is defined as any technology-mediated communication that allows users to communicate or exchange messages or content with others, either individually or in groups. Examples of electronic communication include, but are not limited to, email, text messages, web applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, and WeChat, online multiplayer video games, and social media such as social networks, blogs, wikis, and forums. Social media includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Discord, Reddit, TikTok and Snapchat.

Personal Use of Social Media

- a. As role models in a position of trust for students and a representative of the School District, you must ensure that your use of electronic communication, even on your personal time, does not reflect negatively on your professional reputation or that of the School District.
- b. Do not represent yourself online as speaking on behalf of the School District, your School, or your colleagues.
- c. Use good judgment and abide by the law. Online communications should reflect the principles of honesty, respect, responsibility, professionalism, and consideration of others. Remember that what you communicate may be archived permanently online.
- d. Monitor all content you or others post to your personal social media accounts to ensure that it is consistent with your role in the School District, professional standards, and this policy.
- e. Never criticize or disparage students, other district employees, the School District, or the education system online.
- f. 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.
- g. Do not disclose any confidential or personal information about students or their parents/guardians in online communications. This includes not posting photographs or videos of students without their guardian's consent.
- h. 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.
- i. 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.

Social Media and Electronic Communications**Communicating with Students and Parents/Guardians**

- a. Provide clear expectations to your 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 electronic device or mobile data, and adjust accordingly.
- b. Maintain professional boundaries by communicating electronically with students only at appropriate hours of the day. If you choose to communicate outside of school hours, remain within School Messenger hours, which operates between 6am and 9pm.
- 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 or Microsoft Teams. Broadcast-only apps and safe-messaging apps, such as Remind and TeamSnap may be used subject to Principal approval.
- d. If you wish to use text messaging as a means of communication with your students and you are using your personal device, you must first receive Principal approval. Expressed written consent from the student's parent/guardian must also be sought. See Appendix A for Text Messaging Permission form.
- e. If you suspect a student is in crisis and may need assistance outside of school hours, provide that student with the numbers to the Integrated Mobile Community Response Team or 211.
- f. 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
- g. 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. Consider the privacy implications of accepting 'friend' or 'follower' requests from parents.
- h. It is recommended that communication with parents/guardians occurs face-to-face, over the phone, or virtually via Teams or your nbed email account. All communication with parents/guardians should be formal, courteous and respectful and should pertain to school related matters.

Social Media and Electronic Communications**School Administered Social Media and Websites**

- 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, Weeblys, Wix, or other blog, file sharing, social media sites or virtual classroom platforms is not permitted
- c. Schools may use social media to share school or social-service related content targeted to families and the public.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Social media platforms evolve quickly and every platform does not align with the District's overall communication strategy. As such, while ASD-S permits school-run Facebook pages, Twitter and YouTube are the recommended platforms to share information and host video content. ASD-S does not permit the use of other school-administered social media accounts, including but not limited to TikTok, Snapchat and Twitch.
 - iii. Any new YouTube, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter accounts must be first approved by the District who will enlist ITSS to create an account with established naming conventions and templates as appropriate.
 - iv. Log-in information and passwords to social media accounts must be provided to ITSS 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.
 - v. 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. All posted or published content to school social media accounts is ultimately the responsibility of the Principal.
- d. Teachers and administrators who choose to utilize Facebook, Twitter or any other social media platform to provide classroom updates and information to parents/guardians must create a professional page, distinct from their personal pages/profiles. Posts must be exclusively about classroom or school activities, and they must be targeted to families, not students.
- e. Do not disclose any confidential or personal information about students or their parents/guardians in online communications. This includes not posting photographs or videos of students without the informed consent of the student and their parents/guardians. See Appendix B for media release form.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Breach of Policy

Appropriate measures will be taken to address any breach of this policy.

Reference

- 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](#)
- [NBTA Code of Professional Conduct](#)
- [AEFNB Code de déontologie](#)
- [RTIPPA – Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [PHIPAA - Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act](#)
- [New Brunswick Education Act & Regulations](#)

Policy Development Sources

- Province of New Brunswick – Code of Conduct – Part I Personnel
- Ontario Ministry of Education – Code of Conduct
- CCHRA Code of Ethics

Appendices

- Appendix A - Text Messaging Permission Form
- Appendix B – Media Release Form



STUDENT INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPHS PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Anglophone South School District and its schools comply with legislation which protects students' personal information, in particular the *Education Act*, the *Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (RTIPPA)* and the *Personal Health Information Privacy and Access Act (PHIPPA)*.

Throughout the school year, we may seek to use student information, such as name, grade or student image, for a variety of purposes (e.g. student achievement, graduations and celebrations, school photos, promotional materials, positive news). The use of your child's personal information requires specific consent from a parent/guardian, if a student is under the age of 18. **Please complete the following form to indicate which activities you consent to and return to the school by _____.**

I, _____ give consent for ASD-S or _____
(name of parent/guardian (or student over 18)) *(name of school)*

to use and disclose personal information regarding my child _____
(name of student)

for the activities checked below.

Please check the appropriate boxes: (to be completed for all students K-12)

- Yes, my child's name and grade level may be released to a school photographer for school pictures and/or identification card and/or school directory.
- Yes, my child's name and photograph may be published in the school yearbook.
- Yes, my child's name, photo and video may be published or broadcast by community or media organizations for academic recognition or positive school activities.
- Yes, my child's name, photo and video may be published on school or district displays/website/social media/newsletters for academic recognition or positive school activities.

If your child is in Grade 12 please check the following boxes if applicable:

- Yes, my child's name and/or photo may be listed in graduation composite.
- Yes, my child's name and/or photo may be listed on a graduation list/program/invitation.
- Yes, my child's name and address can be released to an elected official for recognition purposes for their graduation from High School.
- Yes, my child's name can be released to community or media organizations for recognition purposes for their graduation from High School or scholarships/achievements.



Signature Parent/Guardian
or Student (over 18)

Relationship to Student

Date

Please see page 2.

Right to Revoke Consent You have the right to revoke consent at any time. Your revocation of consent must be in writing to the Principal of the school. Note that your revocation of consent would not be retroactive and would not affect uses or disclosures already made according to your prior consent.

Notes:

1. Students involved in performing arts, scholastic competitions or athletic activities perform or compete in public venues, including school. It is reasonable to expect that photographs or videos may be taken by spectators and the media. Once parents/ guardians or other members of the public are invited, the event becomes a public event and anyone in attendance may take photographs or videos without first obtaining consent. Visitors are reminded to be respectful of other individual's privacy, but the school is not able to control the images captured in these situations and the images may be shared by that person on social media sites.
2. Video surveillance equipment may be used in schools or buses to enhance the safety of students and staff, to protect property and to aid in the identification of intruders or other persons who may pose a risk to school community members.
3. If the form is not returned, the default answer is "no" to all the questions.

If you have any questions regarding our privacy practices please contact:

RTIPPA Coordinator
(506) 658-5300
asdsinfo@nbed.nb.ca

Further information on the Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act can be found online at www.gnb.ca/info or by contacting the Information Access and Privacy Unit at ATI-AAI@gnb.ca or by phone at (506) 444-4180.

For further information regarding the Department of Education's policy on information use, please refer to the Information and Communication Technologies Use policy (Policy 311). The policy is posted on the Department of Education's website at gnb.ca.



STAFF-to-STUDENT TEXT MESSAGING PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

(school)

To ensure transparency and the protection of staff and students, any staff member or volunteer wishing to communicate via text message with a student using a personal device (i.e. not a government issued phone), must first receive signed consent from that student’s parent/guardian if the student is under the age of 18. Text messaging with students under the age of 13 is not permitted. Any communication, including through text messaging, between staff (specifically teachers, coaches, or activity leaders) and students must adhere to policy ASD-S-### Social Media and Electronic Communications.

The option to opt-in to text messaging is not a requirement. Staff have multiple ways to communicate with students such as in-person, Microsoft Teams, and email and an alternate method of communication will be used for students who do not have access to a device or who do not have permission to receive texts from staff.

DRAFT

(Staff Member Name)

(Name of Class or Activity)

requests your permission to communicate with your child via text message for purposes consistent with their shared class or activity.

Please complete the following:

- Yes, the above-named staff member may contact my child via text messaging for purposes consistent with their shared activity for the duration of their class or activity.
- No, I do not give permission to the above-named staff member to communicate with my child via text messaging.

Please complete this form and return to the school by

(date)



Signature Parent/Guardian
or Student (over 18)

Relationship to Student

Date

Right to Revoke Consent You have the right to revoke consent at any time. Your revocation of consent must be in writing to the Principal of the school. Note that your revocation of consent would not be retroactive and would not affect communications shared prior to your prior consent. If you have any questions regarding our communication practices please contact your child’s Principal.