	POLICY NO. ASD-S-243
Anglophone South School District	
Social Media and Electronic Communications	

Category	**Human Resources**	
Adopted	August 2023	**Revised**	

Policy Statement

Electronic communication tools, such as texting, messaging apps, and social media are part of an evolving communication landscape. Anglophone South School District recognizes the importance of providing 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 is vital to maintaining the public trust and appropriate professional relationships.
- 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.
- 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.

Rationale

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

The following has been established to mitigate both the employees' and students' 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, coaches, and contracted employees. The policy applies at all times, when an individual represents ASD-S in an official or unofficial capacity and supports the ASD-S Professional Conduct – Policy 232.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

Purpose

> ➢ To develop positive relationships and effective communication with families and students
> ➢ To protect staff and students from issues that may arise from unclear boundaries
> ➢ 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's Policy 703, Positive Learning and Working Environment

Definitions

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 include, but are not limited to, email, text messages, web applications such as WhatsApp and Messenger, online multiplayer games, and social media. Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Discord, Reddit, Twitch, TikTok, and Snapchat.

Procedures

1. Personal Use of Social Media

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, 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.

d. Never criticize or disparage online, students, other district employees, the school district, or the provincial education system.

e. Refrain from inappropriate, heated, or other professionally unacceptable postings. Consider whether any content may reflect poorly on you, your school, the school district, or the provincial 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.

f. 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 with whom you solely have, or have had, a staff/pupil relationship.

g. 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 must be kept to a minimum.

h. Handle work-related questions or concerns through appropriate off-line channels, and not via social media, including school or district pages.

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.

2. School Administered Social Media

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 pages, Twitter and YouTube are the recommended platforms to share information and host content. ASD-S does not permit the use of other school-administered social media accounts, including but not limited to TikTok and Snapchat.

d. All new Facebook, Twitter, 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 B 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. See Appendix A for media release form.

3. 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, Weeblys, Wix, or other blog, file sharing, social media sites or virtual classroom platforms 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.

4. Communicating 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.

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. If you suspect a student is in crisis and may need assistance outside of school hours, provide that student with the number to a qualified resource, such as the Integrated Mobile Community Response Team or 211.

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
  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.

5. 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. 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-S adheres to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Policy 703, Positive Learning and Working Environment, to ensure students and staff are safe and feel secure 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 child's teacher or principal. If a satisfactory result cannot be achieved at the school level, families may then address their questions, issues, or concerns to the district via the Director of Schools. Issues or concerns, taken to social media will not be addressed or responded to until they are brought forward through the appropriate channels. See Policy ASD-S-360, Parent/Public Communication of Concerns for more information.

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.

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
- ➢ Policy ASD-S-360, Parent/Public Communication of Concerns
- ➢ Policy ASD-S-232, Professional Conduct

> ➢ [Policy ASD-S-731, Non-Instructional Use of Personal Electronic Devices at School and During Instructional Hours](#)
> ➢ [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 – Media Release Form
> ➢ Appendix B – Social Media Best Practices

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 R*ight 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   Relationship to Student   Date
                 or Student (over 18)

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.

Appendix B

ASD-S 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-S 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-S 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 *Tiger's Den*, or *KVMS*, or *School Happenings*)
- Reviews are turned off
- The ability for the public to post on your page is turned off
- Messenger is turned off

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.

Appendix B

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-S. 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 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 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, DON'T 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.

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-S 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.

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