

**TITLE: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS**

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**COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND EQUITY**

The District recognizes its responsibility to ensure that this procedure and the associated work promotes and protects Indigenous, equity, and human rights. The District will strive to address and eliminate discrimination and structural and systemic barriers for students, staff, and community.

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**1.0 RATIONALE**

To provide standards for the provision and management of access to the District's Electronic Communication Systems and resources for employees, students, and others for the purpose of supporting working and learning in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB).

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

Please refer to Appendix A for a list of definitions of terms used in this procedure.

**3.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 3.1 B&LT (Business and Learning Technologies) is responsible for the planning, development, and day-to-day operation of all Electronic Communication Systems and reserves the right to restrict which electronic communications systems are approved for use in the District.
- 3.2 The Communications department is responsible for the management of the OCDSB website and the oversight of school websites.

**4.0 PROCEDURES**

Scope and Application

- 4.1 This procedure applies to all Users who are provided access to the District's Electronic Communication Systems.
- 4.2 All Users must abide by all OCDSB policies when using the District's Electronic Communication Systems. This includes Policy [P.125.SCO School District Code of](#)

[Conduct](#), Policy [P.147.GOV Human Rights](#), and Policy [P.100.IT Appropriate Use of Technology](#).

- 4.3 District social media accounts as well as staff personal accounts are addressed under Procedure PR.672.IT Social Media.

#### Access for Students and Staff

- 4.4 The District will provide students and permanent and casual employees with secure access to the corporate network, email system, Direct Messaging Platforms, file storage, learning management systems, electronic collaboration systems, and other business and learning tools for educational, business, and professional learning purposes.
- 4.5 Access will be provided up to two weeks prior and not later than the start date. This will be determined based on:
- a) role of the individual seeking access;
  - b) status of human resources documentation completion; and
  - c) the signing of the confidentiality agreement;
- 4.6 Access will be terminated with the end of enrolment or employment.

#### Access for Community Members

- 4.7 The District may provide community organizations with access to Electronic Communications Systems, subject to certain restrictions based on role, privacy, security, and operational considerations. Approval of such accounts will be done on a case-by-case basis by Business and Learning Technologies.
- 4.8 Individuals or organizations that may be granted access include, but are not limited to:
- a) School councils, advisory committees, and other school-based stakeholders, subject to appropriate limitations, for the purpose of supporting the OCDSB-related activities.
    - i. School council and advisory committee chair accounts will be deemed "office holder accounts", which are designated by the name of the office, for example, "School Council Chair" rather than in the name of the individual who holds that office.
    - ii. Chairs may designate a member of their council or committee to manage correspondence through these accounts.
  - b) Partner organizations with regular employment relationships with the District, including, but not limited to Ottawa-Carleton Education Network (OCENET), the Education Foundation of Ottawa, and Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO), subject to role-based needs.
  - c) Service providers or members of organizations within the community with whom the District has a memorandum of understanding for services to support the mandate of the District, subject to the services being provided;

- d) Selected outside suppliers of goods and/or services in order to facilitate support for Users within the District. While these account-holders represent commercial enterprises, the defined purpose of the account will be to support their products, not to market them.
- 4.9 Prior to gaining access to the District's Electronic Communications Systems, authorized individuals or organizations must complete and submit [Appendix B: Community Member Appropriate Use of Information Technology Agreement](#).

#### Electronic Mails (e-mails)

- 4.10 Users are responsible for the maintenance of their designated e-mails including:
- a) checking their personal mailboxes as frequently as possible;
  - b) tracking messages for which they are accountable;
  - c) effectively managing messages within the space allocation of their account;
  - d) archiving or saving important messages and attachments as a file in their storage space; and
  - e) not sharing their passwords with anyone.
- 4.11 Business and Learning Technologies will enforce the following standards for passwords and make it known to staff:
- a) changing frequently;
  - b) using arbitrary combinations of letters, numbers, upper and lower case, and symbols;
  - c) not including personal identifiers; and
  - d) not being saved by clicking on the "Save Password" option in web browsers and similar software.
- 4.12 Electronic Communications may be considered corporate records and the property of the District and as such may be subject to the access to information provisions of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 4.13 Users are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of email communications.
- 4.14 Users should exercise discretion and recognize that email messages can be forwarded, copied inappropriately or indiscriminately replied to using the "Reply All" function.
- 4.15 Mail Lists (MLs) are maintained by B&LT for the purposes of communicating central messages to the District employees and will only be used by central departments.

#### Discussion Groups

- 4.16 Discussion groups are intended to provide a discussion forum in support of the District's mission and goals, allowing the widest possible spectrum of distribution and input through them.

- 4.17 Requests for new discussion groups must be submitted to [csc@ocdsb.ca](mailto:csc@ocdsb.ca) specifying:
- a) the audience of the group;
  - b) the purpose of the group; and
  - c) the access privileges requested.
- 4.18 Requests for new discussion groups will be subject to the approval of the Business and Learning Technologies Leadership Team, in consultation with appropriate committees and/or senior staff as required and subject to resource availability and level of benefits to the District.
- 4.19 The District will maintain a discussion group to allow Users of the system to advertise the sale of goods or services within the District.
- a) Advertisements for the sale of goods or services may only be placed in the "Classified" group.
  - b) The sale of illegal goods and services is prohibited.
  - c) Messages that do not comply with the purpose of the group will be removed.

#### OCDSB Webpages

- 4.20 Web pages are created for educational, business, and professional learning purposes and must be created on a District approved platform and meet the following criteria:
- a) compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#);
  - b) consistency of content with the educational aims, policies, and procedures of the District;
  - c) containing no commercial or promotional advertising;
  - d) linking to official District documents, when applicable, rather than posting the documents to web pages, and monitoring links to ensure they are functioning and content remains appropriate; and
  - e) content should reflect the diverse population of the OCDSB.
- 4.21 The Communications department is responsible for the management of the District website and all associated webpages, including the school and department template webpages.
- 4.22 Domain names for any sites created by schools or departments must be registered through Business and Learning Technologies.
- 4.23 Copyright must be respected.

#### Personal Information on OCDSB Webpages

- 4.24 Prior to posting names or photos of students or their work, [Appendix C: OCDSB 021 OCDSB Media/School Website Permission Form](#) must be obtained from the parents/guardians or Adult Students. Communications will seek approval from staff for their photos to be used on web pages and/or publications.
- 4.25 Pictures may identify school/department teams and organizations but should not include students' full names.

#### Liability

- 4.26 The District is not responsible for any damages suffered, including loss of data resulting from delays or service interruptions, or for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through internet services; or

#### Managing Non-compliance

- 4.27 Users who fail to comply with this procedure, may have their access limited and/or removed, and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, expulsion, or termination, and, where appropriate, criminal charges or civil action. This includes the reporting of professional misconduct of staff to a governing regulatory body (e.g., Ontario College of Teachers, Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, etc.), where appropriate.
- 4.28 Where inappropriate information, an e-mail message, or hateful or offensive messaging has been posted, the District will seek to remove the offending postings as quickly as possible, within technical limitations.
- 4.29 Upon approval of one of the following: the Director of Education or designate, the Executive Officer, Information Technology and Digital Transformation, General Manager of Business and Learning Technologies, General Counsel, Superintendent of People, Culture and Leadership or the Privacy Officer, Business and Learning Technologies will remove an email from the inboxes of internal email boxes when:
- a) the email content is malicious or poses a threat to the User or the District (e.g., phishing attack);
  - b) the email contains sensitive information that was sent to the wrong individuals (e.g., confidential student information sent to the wrong individuals);
  - c) the email content is injurious to the tone of the school/District or to the physical or mental well-being of others or were sent contrary to a Policy, Procedure or management direction.; or
  - d) the email may be libelous or where the further dissemination of the email may expose the District to liability.
- 4.30 Where an email is a security risk, the team manager for Security can authorize the removal of the email.

## **5.0 APPENDICES**

### Appendix A: Procedure Definitions

Appendix B: [Community Member Appropriate Use of Information Technology Agreement \(PDF Accessible Version\)](#) ([Electronic Version](#))

Appendix C: [OCDSB 021 Media/School Website Permission Form](#)

## 6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

[Education Act, 2000, ss. 170, 171, 307](#)

[Ontario Teaching Profession Act](#)

[Council of Ministers of Education Fair Dealing Guidelines](#)

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0](#)

Ontario College of Teachers [Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media Guidelines](#)

OCDSB Policy [P 026 SCO - Student Suspension and Expulsion](#)

OCDSB Procedure [PR 515 SCO - Student Suspension and Expulsion](#)

OCDSB Procedure PR.672.IT Social Media (under development)

OCDB Procedure [PR 685 IT - Mobile Devices](#)

OCDB Procedure [PR 703 HR - Disconnecting From Work Related Communications](#)

## APPENDIX A: PROCEDURE DEFINITIONS

In this procedure,

**Automatic content from the web** means content which can be displayed automatically on a web page without being vetted and authorized by a Board employee. Examples could include guest books or message boards or “pop-up” advertising.

**Direct Messaging Platform** means communication tools that allow users to send private messages to each other. These platforms are typically designed for one-to-one or small group conversations that are not visible to the public or the wider network. Examples could include chat or text messaging.

**Electronic Communication Systems** means but is not limited to the corporate network, email system, file storage, learning management systems, collaboration systems, social media and other applications, software and hardware tools used for business and learning.

**E-mail means** the electronic transfer of messages to one or more persons.

**Inappropriate message** means a statement that is unsuitable or unacceptable, violent or hateful, for example a negative statement by a staff member about any other staff member, student or Board official.

**Mailing list** means a list of email addresses. When an electronic mail message is addressed to a mailing list, the message is simultaneously transmitted to all those on the list. Users can create custom mailing lists, and if there is sufficient demand and resources permit, some mailing lists may be maintained centrally as lists for use by designated staff.

**OCDSB Environment** means Board property, school buses, virtual learning and working environment, electronic media, school or work-authorized events or activities, in before- and after-school programs including co-curricular activities and field trips, and may include any other circumstances that may have an impact on the school or work climate.

**Online Discussion Group** means a threaded discussion group allowing different groups of Users to post, read and respond to the postings, subject to access controls. Discussion Groups normally have different levels of access control, depending on the intent of the group and the access privileges granted to the User or group of Users. “OSSTF” and “Subject Councils” are examples of Discussion Groups.

**School websites** means all school and school council pages.

**Standard webpage** means a web page that is produced centrally and posted for each OCDSB school, and linked to the OCDSB main pages.

**User** means any member of the OCDSB Community using personal or District Information Technology within the OCDSB Environment.