



Title: SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Adopted: February 2024

Revised: June 2024, December 2024

Authority: Personal Information and Protection of Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and its regulations
Copyright Act

Related: Policy GOV 005: Trustee Code of Conduct
Policy PCE 006: School Council
Policy SHSM 003: Code of Conduct
Policy PCE 001: Accessibility Standards
Policy OP 001: Records Management
Policy SHSM007: Appropriate Use of Information Technologies
Policy BF 003: Copyright – Fair Dealing

POLICY

It is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority (herein referred to as the “Authority”) to support appropriate, safe, and secure communication between the school and its community (staff, students, parents/caregivers, trustees), by providing guidelines for effective digital communication and participation to support student achievement and well-being.

Furthermore, it is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority that posts on the official social media accounts of the Authority are limited to topics as outlined in the guidelines of this policy.

BACKGROUND

1. The Authority recognizes that emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way individuals and organizations communicate.
2. Local, national or international events of a social, political or catastrophic nature are often very complex as far as their background and implications are concerned.
3. Oftentimes the information on social or mainstream media about such events is incomplete, unclear or contradictory, especially in the early stages.

4. Social media posts about such events, even those with the most thoughtful of intents, are often criticized by those who are passionate about the particular issue, for their contents or their omissions.
5. School staff and leadership cannot be expected to be fully versed on all the complexities of a particular issue.

DEFINITION

6. Social media constitutes the myriad of internet-based tools and platforms that increase and foster the sharing of information, making the transfer of text, photos, audio, video, and other information in general almost effortless among users. Social media includes blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, e-mail or any other existing or emerging communications platform.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

7. Recognizing the importance of technology and communication in 21st century education, the Authority uses social media to enhance and facilitate communication with students, parents, employees and community partners.
8. The Authority recognizes the use of social media as a viable means to engage in meaningful discussions, promote the values-based learning happening in the community and celebrate the successes of students and staff.
9. The Authority encourages open and engaging conversation but expects that all individuals be respectful and keep posts relevant, positive and constructive. The Authority reserves the right to delete any comment or review, without notice and without providing reasons.
10. All Authority staff and trustees are expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism while using digital communication tools, including websites and social media accounts, and recognize that all communication can shape public opinion about oneself, one's profession, the school, the Authority or public education generally.
11. The Authority will follow official accounts of various stakeholder organizations that are believed to be relevant. The Authority does not follow students, or parents of students (unless their work is relevant to that of the Authority). Following an account does not imply endorsement of any kind. Comments and posts expressed by followers on Authority social media pages do not reflect the opinions and/or positions of the Authority, its employees or Trustees. The Authority is not liable for content posted by any user or subscriber in any forum, message or social media area.
12. Subject to the guidelines outlined in sections 17 and 18 below, the Authority may repost, like, and share information from other users or accounts that may be of value to its community. Reposts, likes and shares should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the originator or of any organization.
13. Online behaviour should reflect the same standards of professionalism, respect, integrity and consideration that would otherwise be applied using face-to-face communication or interactions with students.

PROCEDURES

General Guidelines

14. All information posted to official Authority social media accounts is the responsibility of the Principal or the Director/Supervisory Officer. Any request to post an item outside of these guidelines must be approved by the Supervisory Officer or designate
15. All content posted to social media networks must be accurate and current.
16. Approved posts created by Authority staff on the official social media platforms of the Authority will pertain to the following topics and only the following topics:
 - Learning and events happening at the school
 - Celebration of student achievement or school events at Bloorview
 - Professional learning in which the staff is engaged
 - Disability awareness
 - Inclusion
 - Special Visitors to Bloorview School
 - Sharing or reposting of events or information of interest to parents
 - Spotlights on staff
 - Admissions information
 - Children's health care
 - Days of significance (see Appendix A)
 - Major religious celebrations (See Appendix B)
 - Employment opportunities at the Authority.
17. For clarity, the official social media sites of the Authority are not to be used for commentary or dissemination of information or reposting from other sites about local, national or international events other than those listed in Appendix A.
18. The Authority will delete any posts deemed to be offensive, defamatory or inappropriate, and will remove any followers that violate these terms. Comments on a post may be turned off if the conversation includes any such comments. Comments that are offensive to an individual or an organization, rude in tone, or abusive will not be tolerated. The Authority does not discriminate against any views, but reserves the right to refuse, edit or remove any of the following:
 - comments contrary to the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code;
 - comments that violate any Authority policy;

- racist, hateful, slanderous, abusive, and/or obscene messages;
 - solicitations, advertisements, or spam;
 - comments that encourage or suggest illegal activity or cyber bullying; and
 - messages where the sender is not the author (nor the copyright holder, if applicable), and/or posted anonymously or by robot accounts.
19. The social media administrator will post the following code of conduct message publicly on the Authority website or provide a link to the Authority's code of conduct policy.

Unacceptable behaviours include content that is unlawful, disrespectful, discriminatory, slanderous, defamatory, malicious, threatening, racist, oppressive, profane, obscene, hateful, tasteless or pornographic will not be tolerated, and will be deleted or reported without notice. Spam, campaigning and advertising are also strictly prohibited. While we encourage free speech and debate, harassment and attacks on others are unacceptable. Abusers of this policy will be blocked or banned.

20. Marketing and promotion of school and Authority-based activities, such as fundraisers and special events, is permitted.
21. The School council may provide content to the Principal, but may not have access to post to the school website directly.
22. The school building floor plan must not be available through the school website or other communication platforms.
23. Any video recording posted of the interior of the school must not disclose the school layout or floor plan details.
24. Photos selected for posting should reflect a professional image as the networking site is an extension of both one's personal and professional reputation.(e.g. photographs relating to alcohol may be deemed inappropriate)
25. Use of social media to speak on behalf of the Authority must be approved by the Supervisory Officer.

Procedures Specifically Related to Students

26. No personal information or photographs shall be posted on websites, messaging tools or social media without written informed consent of the parent/guardian, or adult student if eighteen (18) years of age or older, or a student 16 years of age and older and removed from parental control.
27. Photos where students cannot be identified may be posted without informed consent
28. When photos of students are posted, with informed consent, they will not include students' last names.
29. When samples of students' work (for example: art, writing, science projects) are posted, with informed consent, they will not include students' last names.

30. Under certain circumstances (for example, when celebrating awards or student achievement), a student's full name may be posted on the Authority websites and social media networks if and only if explicit informed consent is obtained which specifies the use of the student's full name.
31. Social media platforms can only be used by students at school for educational purposes and as directed by an educator.

Procedures Specifically Related to Staff

32. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their online activities do not interfere with their job requirements. To this end, employees are not to be using social media for personal use during working hours/instructional time, unless on an approved break.
33. Employees are prohibited from using social media channels for evaluating the performance of their co-workers or students.
34. Employees are prohibited from using social media channels to publicly criticize or complain about the behavior or actions of students, staff, parents, community partners, vendors, suppliers or other members of the broader school community.
35. If an employee learns that they have posted in error or have communicated incorrect information, via the Authority's social media channel, they must take the necessary steps to correct the information immediately.
36. Since reputations are built on trust, employees are expected to disclose their identity and affiliation with the Authority whenever discussing work topics via social media channels.

Violations of this policy

37. Posts on Authority social media sites will be deleted if they:
 - are spam or advertising
 - are clearly off-topic or disruptive
 - advocate illegal activity or cyberbullying
 - promote particular services, products or political organizations
 - infringe on copyrights or trademarks
 - violate any Authority policies
 - breach the safety or privacy of any Authority student or staff
 - use offensive language or are slanderous in nature
 - are otherwise deemed inappropriate
38. Violation of this policy, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
39. Individuals who are in violation of any of these guidelines could be banned from further visiting and contributing to the Authority social media platforms.

DAYS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Appendix A

- Autism Awareness Day
- Black History Month
- Children’s Mental Health Week
- Family Day
- Father’s Day
- Halloween
- Holocaust Remembrance Day
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- International Transgender Day of Visibility
- International Women’s Day
- Indigenous Language Day
- Martin Luther King Jr Day
- Mother’s Day
- National Access Ability Week
- National Indigenous People’s Day
- National Indigenous Veterans Day
- National Nursing Week
- New Years Day (various)
- Orange Shirt Day (Truth and Reconciliation)
- Pink Shirt Day
- Pride Month
- Remembrance Day
- Thanksgiving
- Treaties Recognition Week
- UN International Day of Families
- Valentine’s Day
- World Teacher’s Day

Appendix B

MAJOR RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

- Christmas
- Diwali
- Easter
- Eid
- Hanukkah
- Holi
- Kwanzaa
- Passover
- Ramadan
- Rosh Hashanah
- Yom Kippur