



---

Title:	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES and ON-LINE CONTENT</b>
Adopted:	February 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 PCE 001: Accessibility Standards Policy OPR 001: Records Management Policy OPR 003: Social Media Posts Policy SHSM007: Appropriate Use of Information Technologies Policy BF 003: Copyright – Fair Dealing

---

## **POLICY**

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

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Authority recognizes that emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way individuals and organizations communicate.

## **DEFINITION**

2. 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**

1. Recognizing the importance of technology and communication in 21st century education, the Bloorview School Authority uses social media to enhance and facilitate communication with students, parents, employees and community partners.

2. 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.
3. The Bloorview School Authority encourages open and engaging conversation but asks that all individuals be respectful and keep posts relevant, positive and constructive. The Authority reserves the right to delete any comment / review, without notice and without providing reasons.
4. All Bloorview School 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, profession, school, the Authority or public education generally.
5. The Authority will follow official accounts of various stakeholder organizations that we believe are relevant to the work we do. 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 necessarily 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 Authority or social media area.
6. The Authority will 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.
7. 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**

1. All information posted to official Bloorview social media accounts is the responsibility of the principal or supervisor.
2. Only staff designated by the Supervisory Officer may post material on Authority social media sites.
3. All content posted to social media networks must be accurate and current.
4. 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 comments listed above. 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, 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 School 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.
5. Where possible, the social media administrators will post the following code of conduct publicly on the platform, or link to the code of conduct on the Authority website.

*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. Repeated abusers of this policy will be blocked or banned.*

6. Marketing and promotion of school and Authority-based activities, such as fundraisers and special events is permitted.
7. School councils may provide content to the school website administrator, but may not have access to post to the school website directly.
8. The school building floor plan must not be available through the school website or other communication platforms.
9. Any video recording posted of the interior of the school must not disclose the school layout or floor plan details.
10. 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).
11. Use of social media to speak on behalf of the Bloorview School Authority must be approved by the Supervisory Officer.

### **Procedures Specifically Related to Students**

1. 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.
2. Photos where students cannot be identified may be posted without informed consent.
3. When photos of students are posted, with informed consent, they will not include students' last names.
4. When samples of students' work (for example: art, writing, science projects) are posted, with informed consent, they will not include students' last names.

5. 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.

### **Procedures Specifically Related to Employees**

1. 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.
2. Employees are prohibited from using social media channels for evaluating the performance of their co-workers or students.
3. 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.
4. If an employee learns that they have posted in error or have communicated incorrect information, via their social media channel, they must take the necessary steps to correct the information immediately.
5. 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**

1. 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
2. Violation of this policy, may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
3. Individuals who are in violation of any of these guidelines could be banned from further visiting and contributing to the Authority social media platforms.