



ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Title: Employee and Student Communication through Social Networking or Electronic Media

Effective Date: November 22, 2011 **Responsibility:** Superintendent of Support Services

A. PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for employee and student contact through Social Networking sites or through electronic media sites (i.e. text messaging or email) that are not accessible to employees or students from Near North District School Board Ontario Ministry of Education servers.

B. ISSUE: The Board recognizes that the use of social networking or electronic media could have a positive effect on instruction and academic achievement of students across the Near North. However, the content of some social networking or electronic media sites directed at or available to students may be inappropriate, contain unlawful information or images, which are contrary to the mission of the Board, or may give the appearance of such.

C. POLICY:

1. Definitions:

a. Social Network

An electronic community maintained on websites or accessed through the Internet, or through accounts on web-based sites, or a site through home based email or other type of internet based account collectively hereinafter referred to as “Social Network” not accessible to monitoring by the Near North District School Board, nor subject to the Board’s Acceptable Use Agreement. For greater certainty a Social Network does not include a School Related Site, defined herein, or an EINM (Educational/Informational Networking/Media Sites) site defined herein, which comply with the requirements of sections 3, 4 and 5 herein.

b. Personal Account

Any account maintained by an employee or a student on a Social Network that is not connected to the Near North District School Board or Ontario Ministry of Education server nor subject to any associated Acceptable Use Agreement.

c. School Related Site

A site created by a Board employee, an administrator, a staff advisor or coach, or other employee providing instruction to students for the Board and posted on a school based website maintained on the Near North District School Board server, or an Ontario Ministry of Education server.

d. Educational/Informational Networking/Media Sites

A site created, maintained, or used by employees for the purpose of providing instruction or other academic or school related information to students that is not accessible to monitoring by the Near North District School Board, or subject to the Board's Acceptable Use Agreement hereinafter referred to as an EINM Site.

e. Student

Any student enrolled in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade or receiving educational services beyond the 12th grade in any public Elementary or Secondary school and currently or formerly enrolled as a student in the Near North District School Board regardless of age. This definition does not include students who have reached the age of majority and are no longer secondary school students and are no longer receiving educational services beyond the 12th grade in any public Elementary or Secondary School.

f. Parent

The legal parent, guardian or relative caregiver of a student under the age of majority.

2. Social Networking & Electronic Media:

- a. Employees of the Board who maintain Personal Accounts shall not allow any student access to his/her Personal Account and shall not contact or interact with students on a student maintained Personal Account unless the student is a member of the employee's immediate family.
- b. Employees shall not publish or distribute on any Personal Account maintained by the employee any personally identifiable information about any student, including but not limited to names, academic assessment or evaluation, addresses, photographs, or videos taken on Board property or at school sponsored event.

- c. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an employee from maintaining Personal Accounts for activities outside the scope of his/her employment and with personally owned equipment.

3. School Related Sites:

- a. Administrators, teachers, support staff and staff advisors are encouraged to use Board and school based websites, or Ontario Ministry of Education websites for classroom, school, or school related, or Board related instructional or informational communications with students, parents and the community.

4. Educational/Informational Networking/Media Sites (EINM Sites):

- a. Any Board employee or staff advisors or coaches may use EINM Sites for instructional, training or informational purposes with the prior written permission of the school principal as outlined in *Regulations* established to implement this Administrative Guideline described below.
- b. Employees are responsible for the content of the EINM Site, the terms of membership or access, and for assuring the privacy of the EINM Site.
- c. The school principal must approve the continued use of the EINM Site on an annual basis and provide the Superintendent or his/her designate written verification of the site's approved by September 30 of each school year. During the 2011-12 school year, the initial implementation year for this policy, EINM Sites for instructional, training or informational purposes in existence as of January 15, 2012 must be reviewed and approved by the school principal by April 1, 2012.

5. Regulations:

- a. The Superintendent, or his/her designate, shall create Regulations for school related and/or EINM Sites.
- b. Regulations for the use of EINM Sites must include, but are not be limited to:
 - i. A written proposal from the employee outlining the instructional, training or informational purpose of the site;
 - ii. A requirement that membership to the site is limited to current students, or student athletes of the employee, the parents of those students, the Superintendent or his/her designate, and at least one (1) administrator for each school that a student member attends;
 - iii. A requirement that the parent(s) of a student member under the age of majority shall be notified of the membership of the student on the site and

giving the parent(s) notice of their entitlement to access to the site and particulars with respect to accessing the site;

- iv. A requirement that the contents of the site must comply with all Board and School policies and codes of conduct;
- v. A requirement that the site must comply with provincial laws concerning the protection of children and privacy, including but not limited to the Ontario College of Teachers *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession and The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*.