

# AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

### NO. 110

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**SUBJECT: WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION**

Legal References: *Education Act: Section 265 Duties of Principal – Care of Pupils and Property; Part XIII – Behaviour, Discipline and Safety; Ontario Regulation 298 – Operation of Schools Section 20 Duties of Teachers – Safety Procedures; Section 23 Requirements for Pupils Guideline – Ontario Schools Code of Conduct; Criminal Code of Canada; Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Ontario Human Rights Code: Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

Related References: *Administrative Procedure 103 Privacy and Confidentiality When Working Outside the Office; AP 112 Communications and Media Relations: AP 138 Positive Workplace Environment; AP 190 Copyright; AP 320 Use of the Internet and Electronic Devices by Students; AP 351 Code of Conduct; AP 352 Promoting Positive Student Behaviour; AP 353 Student Suspension: AP 354 Student Expulsion; AP 357 Violence Free Schools*

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This Administrative Procedure is intended to provide guidelines for the development and maintenance of websites created by the Avon Maitland District School Board, its schools, its staff, and its students. Websites are effective means of communicating with our stakeholders in education, we need to ensure that minimum standards are maintained with respect to the content of our websites, including but not limited to issues related to privacy, security, copyright legislation, ease of navigation, and accessibility.
- 1.2 For the purposes of this AP, the term "website" shall also refer to wikis, blogs, and other forms of internet social media.

## 2. Responsibility

### 2.1 Board Level Authoring/Publishing

- 2.1.1 Board websites are the responsibility of the Director's Office and will be created and maintained by the Board webmasters under the direction of the Manager of Communications.
- 2.1.2 Individuals within departments may be given the responsibility and the tools for updating sections of the board website. The Manager of Communications will retain responsibility for reviewing the content on the departmental pages to ensure it meets the guidelines articulated in this document.

### 2.2 School Level Authoring/Publishing

- 2.2.1 The school principal or designate shall act in the role of school webmaster.
- 2.2.2 School websites will be created and maintained by the designated school webmaster and monitored by the Communications and Information Technology Departments of the Avon Maitland District School Board.
- 2.2.3 Principals are responsible for periodic review of the content posted to their school websites to ensure it is current, appropriate, and accurate.

## 2.3 **Teacher Authoring/Publishing**

2.3.1 Teacher web pages or websites must conform to the standards outlined in this Administrative Procedure.

2.3.2 Teachers may also create and maintain their own First Class Web Sites, linked to their school site. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that their websites conform to the standards outlined in this Administrative Procedure. School webmasters will work with teachers in creating and maintaining their sites, as necessary.

## 2.4 **Student Authoring/Publishing**

Students may create and maintain Board or school sanctioned websites only under the supervision of teachers or webmasters, who will be responsible for ensuring that the student websites conform to Board standards.

## 2.5 **Third Party Sites**

This section relates to sites where students and teachers create accounts and post content to services hosted on servers outside the Board.

2.5.1 Staff who use such sites must ensure that all users comply with the Terms of Service as listed on the third-party website and the Board's Computer Use – Code of Conduct.

2.5.2 Students have been instructed not to disclose personal information over the Internet.

2.5.3 As of September 2015, GAFE (Google Apple for Education) email accounts are now required by each AMDSB student, regardless of age or grade. Principals must inform parents and students at the start of each school year that this email account has been created and share the "Conditions of Use for GAFE Account". (Please refer to Form 110 Letter to Parents and Terms and Conditions for GAFE Account.)

# 3. **Content**

## 3.1 **Board Websites**

3.1.1 Contact Information - The main page of each site must include the Board's name, logo, mailing address, and phone numbers.

3.1.2 Subsequent pages on each board site must have direct links to the main Board page.

## 3.2 **School Websites**

3.2.1 Purpose - The home page provides information about the school, including its location, organizations, activities, and resources.

3.2.2 The site points students, staff, and visitors to valuable school and curriculum resources and offers an opportunity to view student work.

3.2.3 The following items are required content for Elementary School\* websites:

- a) a photo of the school, its mailing address, phone and fax numbers,
- b) the Principal's name and photo, a welcome message, and his/her email address,
- c) a staff list with links to teacher websites, where applicable,
- d) the school's daily schedule,
- e) a current calendar of events,
- f) a Twitter widget for the school's Twitter account,
- g) the Board's School Year Calendar,
- h) the current school newsletter,
- i) School Council information,

- j) links to Board's home page, Delays and Cancellations, Getting Students Connected,
  - k) school building accessibility information, and,
  - l) the student handbook.
- \* **Grade 7/8 Elementary Schools housed within Secondary Schools may be included as part of the Secondary School website.**

3.2.4 The following items are required content for Secondary School websites:

- a) the school name, mailing address, phone and fax numbers,
- b) the Board's official logo prominently displayed, linked to Board home page,
- c) the Principal's name and his/her email address,
- d) the Vice-principal's name and his/her email address,
- e) a staff list with links to teacher websites, where applicable,
- f) the Board's School Year Calendar,
- g) School Council Information - links to key student resource sites, such as Success for Life, Huron-Perth Student Transportation Services, Getting Students Connected Secondary, etc.
- h) the school's Course Calendar, and,
- i) a Twitter widget for the school's Twitter account.

3.2.5 The following items are recommended content for school websites:

- a) a brief history of the school,
- b) samples of student work, and,
- c) special event information such as reunions, athletic events, school fundraisers, etc., and,
- d) school logo and/or mission statement if schools have them.

3.2.6 Pages that contain time-sensitive information, such as calendars, school events, and staff information, must be updated on a regular basis to ensure that current, accurate information is provided. This also includes content contained in the Twitter Widget which shall appear on the main page of every school site. Web pages must not contain any commercial or promotional advertising without prior approval from the Director or designate.

### 3.3 Staff Websites

3.3.1 Staff may create educational sites containing homework, resources, or lessons. Only school-related content may be displayed on staff web pages. It is recommended that staff pages contain links to the school and board websites.

3.3.2 Personal student information must **not** be posted and student photos, videos and or school work may only be posted provided written parental permission has been granted. (See Section 7 – Confirmation of Personal Information and Emergency Contact Form)

### 3.4 Student Websites

3.4.1 Students may, upon approval and supervision from staff members, create web pages relating to a course, class project, or other school-related activity. The supervising staff member is responsible for content on web pages and reserves the right to exercise editorial control over such publications.

3.4.2 Student web pages hosted on Board servers must have a purpose that is directly linked to the curriculum or school activities.

3.4.3 If students are required to create a website, blog, wiki, etc. for educational purposes, parents will be notified by the classroom teacher and these sites will be set up under the auspices of the Avon Maitland District School Board, using GAFE accounts.

- 3.4.4 Personal information about the author cannot be posted: this includes, but is not limited to, home address, telephone number, email address, age, and links to personal websites or social networking accounts. The student's name may be posted only with written consent from the parent or guardian. (See AP 103 Management of Personal Information – Student)
- 3.4.5 All graphics, text, audio and video content must be copyright free, original material created by the student or material for which the student has expressed written permission to post on the Internet from the holder of the copyright or an appropriate Creative Commons license.
- 3.4.6 Student websites hosted on Board servers must include the following information:
  - a) the name of the supervising teacher and the teacher's contact information, and
  - b) the name of the school and the activity or course to which the site is connected.

#### **4. Design Standards**

- 4.1 School and Board web web-sites must not contain copyrighted images, text, or software without permission or in violation of the copyright laws of Canada.
- 4.2 All work should be free of any spelling or grammatical errors.
- 4.3 Board logos as provided in FirstClass may be used but not modified in any way.
- 4.4 All links to other web pages should meet these criteria:
  - a) all main pages must link to the Avon Maitland District School Board home page
  - b) links should be limited to those sites that have an educational purpose;
  - c) links may be used to provide resources for teachers and as guided sources for students;
  - d) links may be used to provide information about the Board and community in general, and specifically schools in the Board;
  - e) neither students nor staff may use the board's web pages to provide links to their personal pages on other servers or online services; and,
  - f) links should be reviewed for content and accuracy on a regular basis.
- 4.5 Feedback

Websites should provide opportunities for visitors to the site to provide feedback or comments.

  - 4.5.1 One means of providing this functionality is a blog format. Where this format is used, postings should be vetted by the webmaster prior to being posted on the public site.
  - 4.5.2 A second option for this feedback is through email responses. Where possible this should be set up in a form on the website to avoid the need to copy and paste the contact address into the respondent's email software.

#### **5. Technical Standards**

- 5.1 Web designers should adhere to the following guidelines\* when creating pages:
  - a) All web pages must have a title (which appears on the browser's title bar);
  - b) All web pages should be created to facilitate efficient loading and viewing regarding graphics, video and sound. Typically a page should load within 30 seconds on a dial-up connection;
  - c) The date of last update should be included on a web page or site;

- d) Each website should include the email address of a contact person;
  - e) A link that returns the user to appropriate points in the Avon Maitland District School Board website should be included on each page;
  - f) Pages should not contain links to other pages that are not yet completed. If further pages are anticipated but not yet developed, the text that will provide the link can be included but should not be made active;
  - g) Web pages containing links to external sites should include the following disclaimer:  
***"The Avon Maitland District School Board does not take responsibility for the contents of external sites listed here and does not by their listing endorse the points of view represented at any particular site."***
- 5.2 Pages should be sized so they will display properly in a variety of screen resolutions. Pages should be previewed and tested at least at "640 x 480", "800 x 600", and "1024 x 768."
- 5.3 Avoid color schemes or backgrounds that make the information on the page hard to read. Colors should be "web safe" as much as possible, so that they will display properly in 256 colors. Avoid using white text or links as white is difficult to print.
- 5.4 Graphics should be used appropriately. Photos and other graphics should generally not exceed a total 250k (file size) per page.
- 5.5 In order to facilitate viewing, it is recommended that video file size be taken into consideration. (Note – videos produced in schools must comply with AP 103 Management of Personal Information – Student, Sec. 5.4)
- 5.6 Consistent navigation is to be used throughout the site. Pages should also maintain a consistent look.
- 5.7 Hosting – Web pages must not be published on a server outside the Avon Maitland District School Board without the permission of the Director's Office. Logins and passwords to school, teacher, or students sites hosted on a server outside the Avon Maitland District School Board shall be provided upon request by the Director's Office or the IT Department.

**\*The Communications Department and/or IT Department will offer support upon request.**

## **6. Accessibility**

Webmasters must consider that many users may be operating in very different contexts that may require some form of assistive technology, including screen readers. Some types of information may not be able to be processed at all and the user may have difficulties in reading or having access to a keyboard or mouse. Slow Internet connections are still common and must be considered when creating pages. Different browsers and operating systems create another layer of possible difficulty. These factors should be taken into account in the design of web-sites in order to ensure universal access by all stakeholders. For accessibility guidelines refer to your staff conference where AODA guidelines have been posted.

## **7. Security and Privacy**

- 7.1 All web pages must be consistent with Board Procedures and Freedom of Information and Privacy Legislation.
- 7.2 The following rules must be followed for reasons of security and protection of individual privacy:
- a) Content on school web pages shall not provide the means for people to contact any student directly. If communication back to the school is needed, it should be directed to the Principal/designate;
  - b) Web pages will not provide personal student information, including email address, phone number, and street address;
  - c) Photographs of students included on the school's web pages must not include student names. School teams and organizations may be identified, titled, but no individual identification of team members;
  - d) When using photographs of persons on the school or board website, the school must have authorization from the parent/guardian on an appropriate form (Confirmation of Personal Information and Emergency Contact Form). Additional written consent must be collected to include student's first and last name. (AP 103 - Section 5 Collection and Use of Student Personal Information);
  - e) Further additional written consent is required for use of a student's image and or personal information on a third party or web 2.0 website. (AP 103 - Section 5.3);
  - f) Schools should not use file names for pages or images that include a student's name. Permission forms are signed annually by students and parents/guardians and must be kept in the school office;
  - g) Staff members' names and business email addresses may be listed on Board and or school web pages to facilitate communication between staff and web page users;
  - h) A school staff member must be responsible for the uploading of files to the school website.

## **8. Acceptable Use of Social Media by Board Employees**

- 8.1. This section of the Administrative Procedure governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of Avon Maitland District School Board and its schools ("Avon Maitland District School Board"). For the purposes of this procedure, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This procedure is in addition to and complements any existing procedures regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.
- 8.1.1 Avon Maitland District School Board employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this procedure. Avon Maitland District School Board employees are subject to this procedure to the extent that they identify themselves as Avon Maitland District School Board employees (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to Avon Maitland District School Board).
- 8.1.2 Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.
- 8.1.3 All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Avon Maitland District School Board employees must otherwise follow as outlined in the Board's Policies and Procedures.

8.1.4 When using images of students and/or first and last name on social media or third party websites, the school must have written consent from the parent/guardian. (AP103)

## 8.2 **Setting up Social Media**

8.2.1 Assistance and advice in setting up social media accounts and their settings can be obtained from the Board's Communications Department and/or IT Department, which may also provide training.

8.2.2 Social media identities, logon IDs and user names may not use the Avon Maitland District School Board's name without prior approval from the Director's Office.

## 8.3 **Confidential Information**

It is perfectly acceptable to talk about work and have a dialogue with the community, but publishing confidential information is not permitted. Confidential information includes things such as information identifying in any way a student or information that could lead to identifying a student, details on the personal information of staff, and internal unpublished information regarding contracts, benefits, or details about our software, current projects, and school or board initiatives not yet in the public domain.

## 8.4 **Protecting Your Privacy**

Privacy settings on social media platforms are the responsibility of the users and should be set at a level comfortable to the user. Be mindful of posting information that you may not want the public to see and we recommend the highest possible privacy settings.

## 8.5 **Honesty**

Do not post anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. Be cautious about protecting yourself and your privacy.

## 8.6 **Respecting Copyright**

It is critical that you respect the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including Avon Maitland District School Board copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is a good practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

## 8.7 **Respecting Your Audience, the Board, and Colleagues**

The public in general, and Avon Maitland District School Board's employees, students, parents, and members of the school communities reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Refrain from posting anything that might be considered an ethnic slur, offensive, defamatory, a personal insult, or an obscenity. Always consider carefully privacy and topics that may be viewed objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of Avon Maitland District School Board.

## **8.8 Respecting Avon Maitland District School Board Corporate and Community Partners, and Suppliers**

Corporate and community partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of any arrangements.

## **8.9 Misinformation and Mistakes**

8.9.1 If you see misrepresentations made about Avon Maitland District School Board in the media, on the internet or posted in social media, the Board would appreciate this misinformation being reported to the Board's Communications Department. Make sure what you are saying via Social Media is factually correct.

8.9.2 If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as copyrighted material), deal with it quickly and remove it.

## **9. Review Process**

9.1 Pages must be reviewed at least monthly to eliminate dated material; a date showing when a last review took place must appear on the page.

9.2 The following person/persons are responsible for reviewing websites:  
Board website – Communications Department and IT webmasters  
School website – the principal, school webmaster, IT, Communications  
Teacher website – the Teacher and Principal  
Student website – the Teacher for whose class the site has been created

## **10. Accountability**

10.1 Upon notification, the Director's Office of the Avon Maitland District School Board reserves the right to authorize the blocking and/or removal of pages that do not meet the requirements of this Web Standards and Usage Policy.

10.2 Schools/sites that are maintaining their own web-sites must provide account information, including logins and passwords, to the Communications and IT Departments to ensure access in emergency situations.