Communications – Website and Social Media Management Procedures 216-B

Category:	Administration
Administered by:	Superintendent Responsible for Digital Support Services, Communications and Public Relations Manager, Privacy Officer
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1.   General

1.1   Any activity that relates to the operation of the board and/or the education of students is considered the business of the board. All staff, students, trustees, and agents of the board, including but not limited to, school councils, the Parent Involvement Committee, and the Student Senate, must take this into consideration when using technology to communicate about the business of the board.

1.2   These procedures work in conjunction with [Policy 318 Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#) and the associated procedures.

1.3   All UGDSB 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 UGDSB or public education generally.

2.   Definitions

UGDSB websites
Refers to all official board-managed websites including, but not limited to, board departments, schools, clubs, teams, and classes.

Social media
Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content, and/or participate in social networking. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok and online gaming

sites.

UGDSB social media accounts
Refers to all official board-managed accounts including, but not limited to, board departments, schools, clubs, teams, and classes.

Third-Party websites
In the context of this policy, any websites not owned or operated by UGDSB.

Third-Party tools/apps/services
In the context of this policy, any tools/apps/services not owned or operated by UGDSB.

School council
In this policy, the term school council refers to the advisory body of parents within a school community which may make recommendations to the school principal or the board on matters outlined in [Policy 201 School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee](#).

Plain language
A way of writing and presenting information so that readers can understand it quickly and easily.

3. Support and Training

3.1 The board supports the principle that staff who are tasked with the responsibility of maintaining board websites and board-approved communication tools are entitled to appropriate professional development opportunities, with the goal of improving competency, efficiency and quality.

3.2 Training opportunities will be provided in the use of approved content management systems, tools, and techniques for the creation and publishing of online content. Training may be provided through:

- workshops

- online resources oriented toward beginner, intermediate or advanced learners

- one-to-one consultations with Digital Support Services or Communications Department staff

3.2.1 Board and school administrators will facilitate training opportunities by providing appropriate supports.

3.3 Support or guidance regarding specific techniques, questions or difficulties will be provided as needed. In many cases, the goal and purpose of such interactions will be to empower the person seeking help to learn something new, achieve a goal, resolve an issue or prevent future difficulties.

3.3.1 The Digital Support Services department may be contacted regarding issues of a technical nature, such as:

- content management systems

- website templates or navigation

- website design or appearance

- functionality, including forms or interactive features

- accessibility standards

- user accounts

- security

- performance

3.3.2 The Communications Department may be contacted for questions about website content and engagement techniques, including:

- effective writing and plain language

- promotional graphics

- photography

- social media

3.4 For current information about resources and support for best practices, please consult the Responsible Use of Digital Technologies Staff Handbook.

4. Content and Standards for Websites

4.1 The Communications and Public Relations Manager and the board's Digital Support Services department, acting under the supervision and authority of the Director of Education, are responsible for the board website, including the design, content updates and online strategy.

4.1.1 Board departments are responsible for maintaining or updating the sections of the board website for which they are the content experts.

4.2 Principals and supervisors are responsible for the management of the content on their own websites and communication platforms. Updates and posts must be current, timely, accurate and made regularly.

4.2.1 Principals and supervisors must be trained and knowledgeable in using board-approved websites and communication platforms.

4.2.2 Content editing, updates, and maintenance of school websites, departmental websites or web pages may be performed by other staff, or by other students that are supervised by staff, as permitted by the principal.

4.2.2.1 To ensure professional standards, customer service, and adherence to policies and regulations, students or parents are not permitted to update, post or publish to any school or departmental website. In situations where students are required to update a website as part of a board or course requirement, students are permitted to do so with appropriate staff supervision.

4.2.2.2 Students may add content to board-managed websites by submitting content electronically to the school administration for consideration and posting.

4.2.3 For all school communications, tasks that must be carried out include updating staff directories and school information, updating the school website calendar, and posting messages through the board-approved communication tools and school's home page.

4.2.4 All content that is communicated through the website and other communication platforms will be subject to review by principals, supervisors and content editors to ensure information is relevant,

accurate, up-to-date, and written in plain language. A principal or supervisor may remove or modify, or direct the removal or modification of, any content that is deemed to be inaccurate or inappropriate.

4.2.5 To enable principals or supervisors to exercise their responsibilities, upon request staff will provide any necessary log-in information and credentials. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure user IDs and passwords are shared and stored in a secure manner.

4.3 To ensure ease of navigation, consistent branding and corporate identification, the board logo will appear on the homepage of all websites and will be hyperlinked to the board website.

4.4 A board copyright declaration will appear in the footer of every website.

4.5 All websites will use a generic e-mail contact for communication.

4.5.1 School principals must have access to the school's generic e-mail account.

4.5.2 Each school/department with a "generic" email account will designate a staff member and an alternate to check the account for messages.

4.6 All websites will adhere to the requirements in the [Responsible Use of Digital Technologies Staff Handbook](#).

4.7 The use of third-party websites is permitted under the following circumstances:

4.7.1 All information posted to websites is the responsibility of the appropriate administrator.

4.7.2 To enable principals or supervisors to exercise their responsibilities, upon request staff will provide any necessary log-in information and credentials. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure user IDs and passwords are shared and stored in a secure manner.

4.7.3 All websites will provide an e-mail contact for communication with the administrator of the site.

4.7.4 All websites should reflect current and accurate information.

4.7.5 It is the responsibility of the administrator of the site to shut down or lockdown the web service once it is no longer monitored or moderated, in accordance with UGDSB Policy 316 Records and Information Management, and the retention schedule outlined in the Records Management Manual.

4.7.6 Websites will not include any identifying information such as personal phone numbers, personal addresses, or personal e-mail addresses for staff or students.

4.7.7 Websites may include a logo or information about a third-party company or organization that provides a service to the UGDSB. Examples of appropriate use are logos in the buttons on UG2GO, UGCloud, or information about a school fundraiser or sponsor. Websites are not to be used for the sale of advertising.

4.8 All websites and web content must meet accessibility standards required under:

- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005
- Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11)
- Board Policy 214 (and procedures 214-A) Accessibility Standards

4.8.1 All publicly accessible websites, blogs, or web applications that have the purpose of communicating or interacting with parents, students or the community are subject to the requirement in 4.8.

4.8.2 It is the responsibility of all staff who participate in the creation of a website or web content to be aware of WCAG 2.0 Level AA guidelines and to implement those standards as required.

4.8.2.1 The practice of promoting web pages over PDF or Word documents on websites is preferred for better and easier WCAG compliance.

4.8.3 It is permissible to link to content on third-party sites which do not meet accessibility standards, and over which the board has no direct control over accessibility.

4.8.3.1 Accessibility standards must be a consideration when choosing to link to content on any third-party site, and the use of alternatives which do meet standards is encouraged.

5.   Third-Party Tools/Board-Approved Tools

All schools and departments must use board-approved third-party tools/apps/services that have gone through the board's vetting process, and must follow the guidelines established for safe use. The board needs to be able to monitor the use of all tools/apps/services in order to protect the safety and privacy of staff and students.

6.   Messaging Tools/Apps

All schools must maintain and utilize the board-approved messaging tools/apps/services (e.g., UGConnect / School Messenger) to provide consistency in communication throughout our school communities.

7.   Social Media

All UGDSB social media accounts must adhere to board standards for acceptable use, privacy, and code of conduct.

7.1   Any use of the UGDSB official logo on social media must be approved by the communications department.

7.2   All information posted to official UGDSB social media accounts is the responsibility of the principal or supervisor.

7.3   To enable principals or supervisors to exercise their responsibilities, upon request, staff will provide any necessary log-in information and credentials to official UGDSB social media accounts. It is the responsibility of both parties to ensure user IDs and passwords are shared and stored in a secure manner.

7.4   UGDSB social media accounts must be set up using an official UGDSB email address. Personal email accounts are not to be used to set up UGDSB social media accounts.

7.5   All schools that have official social media accounts must link to their school website in their social media account profile(s).

7.6   Only UGDSB staff may have administrative access to UGDSB social media accounts. Parents and students are not to be granted access to UGDSB social media accounts.

7.6.1 In situations where students are required to update a social media account as part of a board or course requirement, students are permitted to do so with staff oversight.

7.7 Social media accounts must be transparent in their ownership and not be presented in a way that may mislead the public, e.g. John Public School Facebook group vs John Public School Parent Council Facebook group.

7.8 All information and content posted on UGDSB social media networks must be accurate and current and shall be consistent with the board's Multi-Year Plan and its policies on [Equity and Inclusive Education](#), [Code of Conduct](#), [Safe Schools](#), and [Harassment in the Workplace](#).

7.9 Social media administrators must enforce a code of conduct for the use of the platform and remove, block or report posts that violate the standards of behaviour specified in the code. Where possible, social media administrators must post the code of conduct publicly on the platform, or link to the code of conduct on a UGDSB website.

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

7.9.2 Social media administrators may block or ban a user from viewing a UGDSB account for violating the code of conduct provided they have screen captured the conduct of concern and consulted with either the Communications and Public Relations Manager (in the case of UGDSB accounts) or the principal/supervisor for school/department accounts. Where possible, a database of banned users with a record of evidence (including screen-captured images) should be maintained.

7.9.3 Decisions to remove posts or close comments to a post may be made by the social media administrator and/or designate. All posts that center identity shall have comments turned off.

7.9.4 Marketing and promotion of school and board-based activities, such as fundraisers and special events, is permitted.

7.10 School websites and board-approved messaging tools must remain the school's primary form of communication. The use of social media is permitted; however, social media should be used as a complementary and secondary form of communication.

7.11 In the event of a social media issue or concern involving a UGDSB account, staff should consider the following:

7.11.1 taking screenshots;

7.11.2 reporting abuse to the social media platform;

7.11.3 reporting to a principal or supervisor;

7.11.4 seeking help from a superintendent and the Communications and Public Relations Manager.

8.   School Council Use of Websites and Social Media

8.1 School council information must be posted by school website administrators.

8.2 School councils must adhere to the standards and requirements outlined in sections 4.7, 4.8, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of these procedures.

8.3 School council contact information must be part of the school website.

8.4 School councils must use the generic school council email address provided to each school.

8.5 School councils may provide content to the school website administrator, but may not have access to post to the school website directly.

8.6 School councils may provide content to the official school social media account administrator, but may not have access to post to the official school social network(s) account directly.

8.7 School councils may have their own social media accounts, however these accounts must be clearly branded as such in both the social media account name and 'About' section. For example, if starting a group on

Facebook, the name must be John PS School Council Facebook group, not John PS Facebook group.

8.8   Any use of the UGDSB official logo on social media must be approved by the communications department.

8.9   All information posted to school council social media accounts is the responsibility of the school council site administrator.

8.10   School council site administrators will provide a copy of the necessary log-in information and credentials for the school council social media sites to the school principal. Principals will keep this information confidential.

    8.10.1 When a new school council social media site administrator is assigned, they will change the password for the sites and share the new passwords with the school principal.

8.11   School councils will set-up school council social media accounts using the generic school council email address provided to each school.

9.   Safety and Security (Student Safeguards)

9.1   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.

    9.1.1 Photos where students cannot be identified may be posted without informed consent.

9.2   With informed consent, when photos of students are posted, they will not include students' last names.

9.3   With informed consent, when samples of students' work (for example: art, writing, science projects) are posted, they will not include students' last names.

9.4   Under certain circumstances (for example, when celebrating awards or student achievement), a student's full name may be posted on UGDSB websites and social media networks if and only if explicit informed consent is obtained which specifies the use of the student's full name.

9.5 The school building floor plan must not be available through the school website or other communication platforms.

9.5.1 Any video recording posted of the interior of the school must not disclose the school layout or floor plan details.