

IDENTIFICATION CODE

PC14-033

TITLE: POLICY REGARDING THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

EFFECTIVE DATE	AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED	RESPONSIBLE FOR FOLLOW-UP
May 22, 2014	Computer Services	Computer Services

INFORMATION PAGE

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ADOPTION	May 22, 2014	Computer Services

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1. Context

Increasingly present in both our personal and professional lives, social media has been quickly adopted by young and old alike in the past few years. They are known for the speed and the ease with which they allow the sharing of content—be it photos, videos, brief comments or expanded viewpoints.

Because their use within the school context requires that users be made aware of certain pitfalls with serious consequences, the Commission scolaire du Littoral, by this policy, wishes to establish guidelines for behaviour expected of staff and students in order to ensure its compliance with the mission of the School Board and laws in effect.

This policy is intended to complement the Commission scolaire du Littoral's *Computer And Network Usage Policy*, which became effective on June 21, 2011.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 Contribute to the achievement of the educational mission of schools;
- 2.2 Promote responsible use of social media in compliance with the rules set forth in this policy;
- 2.3 Preserve the reputation of the School Board, along with that of its staff and students;
- 2.4 Prevent misuse and improper or illegal use of social media by users.

3. Definitions

Social media are mainly characterized by simple, interactive interfaces that allow web users with little technical knowledge to use new Web features and share information.

Social media includes:

- Social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, Digg, Ning, Friendster, LinkedIn, etc.);
- Photo and video sharing sites (Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, iTunes, etc.);
- Micro-blogging sites (Twitter, etc.);
- Personal or corporate blogs, on-site comment pages;
- Chat rooms (Yahoo!, Groups, Google Groups, Wave, MSN Messenger, etc.);
- Online encyclopaedias (Wikipedia, etc.);
- Any other website allowing persons or entities to make use of online publication tools.

4. Areas of application

The current policy applies to School Board students (youth and adults) and staff (full-time part-time or temporary) as well as trainees.

It also applies to parents and to any other person making use of School Board information

technology resources.

5. Guiding Principles

- 5.1 Each institution and department within the School Board makes certain information technology resources available to users with a view to providing support for educational and administrative services.

Use of such resources must comply with the School Board's educational mission and current policies as well as with applicable regulations and laws of Quebec and Canada (Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, Criminal Code, Civil Code of Quebec, Act to Establish a Legal Framework for Information Technology, Education Act, etc.).

This use must also comply with principles set forth in Supreme Court labour trilogy decisions to the effect that by virtue of their duties, teachers play a role of paramount importance for students and that their behaviour must be worthy of the trust placed in them by their employer and generally expected of them by the population at large.

- 5.2 It is forbidden, by any means whatsoever, to make personal remarks on behalf of the School Board or a member institution in chat rooms or sessions or via any other means of exchange of opinion in such a way as to suggest that the opinions expressed are endorsed by the School Board or by said institution, unless otherwise authorized to do so within the exercise of one's duties.
- 5.3 Privacy and image rights: In private institutions, such as schools, employee or student consent (or that of parents for minors) is required to photograph, film or record employees and students as well as to publish the resulting media.
- 5.4 Any information posted on social media is considered to be public. Users must therefore apply good judgement when making comments.
- 5.5 The School Board will not tolerate any message or file containing coarse, aggressive, defamatory, intimidating, demeaning or discriminatory remarks based on sexual orientation, race, religion, political convictions, language, ethnic origin, social status or disability.
- 5.6 The name or logo of the School Board or of any member institution may only be used to create accounts on various social media with the written authorization of the School Board Secretary-General. If a user requires its use for a specific educational purpose, they must obtain permission to do so from the administration of the educational institution in question.
- 5.7 None may use the email address given them by the School Board to create personal accounts on social media.
- 5.8 All users must comply with social media rules of use and netiquette.

Netiquette is defined as a set of rules for good behaviour for Internet users when exchanging, notably in chat rooms and on social media (proper grammar and spelling, formatting, politeness).

6. Behaviour expected of staff members

Staff member behaviour directly correlates with the community's perception of their ability to occupy a position of trust and influence, as well as with citizen trust in the school system in general. Public assessment of behaviour is generally based on the position one occupies and not on the place or time of the conduct in question. Inappropriate behaviour on the part of an employee, even when outside of work hours, impacts on their role as a model, as well as their authority and credibility.

- 6.1 The School Board requires that staff members make use of judgement and discretion and behave loyally and with regard for other's privacy when using social media.
- 6.2 Use of social media for personal purposes during work hours is prohibited. Work hours refer to any period of work with the exception of meal and break periods.
- 6.3 Staff members must act responsibly when making public personal facts or events or sharing them with students.
- 6.4 All staff members must act impersonally with students and abstain from developing close ties that could lead one to question their impartiality.
- 6.5 All confidential information regarding students, such as that contained in their student or professional file or any information pertaining to personal issues, intervention measures adopted with them or details of their private or school lives must never be disclosed or be subject to discussion on social media.
- 6.6 All staff members working with students must enforce the rules regarding the use of social media during educational activities, notably those pertaining to minimum age requirements.

7. Breaches

The School Board assumes no responsibility, direct or indirect, for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused to users in the event of or as a result of the use of its information technology, Web and social media resources.

All users subject to the present policy (e.g. staff members, students, parents) committing an inappropriate or illegal act are liable to civil or criminal prosecution and to claims for damages.

Any breach of this policy may lead to suspension of access privileges to School Board information technology resources and networks.

7.1 Staff members

This policy applies to staff members, both during and outside of work hours when actions impact School Board staff's professional or student's school lives.

Any breach of this policy may result in administrative action or disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal.

7.2 The student

This policy applies to students, both during and outside of school hours when actions impact student's school lives.

Any breach of this policy may lead to measures or sanctions as provided for in the plan to prevent and deal with bullying and violence in schools or the institution's code of conduct including suspension, transfer and even expulsion from the School Board.

7.3 The parent

Parents of minor students undertake to ensure that their children respect the rules and netiquette for the use of social networks. Parents of students who violate this policy will be contacted and their assistance sought in helping to remedy the situation.

8. **Effective date is May 22, 2014.**