

SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

MEMORANDUM

2010-2011: 79

TO: Elementary Principals
Elementary Vice-Principals
Secondary Principals
Secondary Vice-Principals

FROM: John Dance
Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: **GUIDELINES FOR USING SOCIAL NETWORKING IN THE CLASSROOM**

Background

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan states that the SCDSB will improve student engagement, learning, and achievement through ICT - enabled learning environments.

One of the strategies to ensure standardization in classrooms and across the system speaks to digital citizenship. The following are expectations from the plan:

- SCDSB will encourage and support student-directed structures and resources aimed at digital citizenship and protection of privacy; and
- SCDSB will implement mandatory staff training to support its requirement that all staff agree to acceptable use of technology standards.

The evolution of the internet and social networking sites has fundamentally changed how we communicate and collaborate with teachers, students, parents and communities. While collaboration in the online world can be a very powerful teaching tool, staff and students must remember that:

- the internet and social networking sites are public places;
- what goes online stays online and may never be fully erased; and,
- in the online world people may not always be who they say they are.

Internet social networking refers to an online community of internet users who share common interests and includes Blogs[®], Wikis[®], Moodles[®], collaboration forums, discussion boards and social networking sites, i.e. Facebook[®], Twitter[®], YouTube[®], etc.

Next Steps

To support appropriate use of SCDSB information technology for teaching, learning and administration, plans are underway to:

- revise Administrative Procedures Memorandum (APM) A1160 Computing and Information Technology – Acceptable Use Guidelines to align it with emerging technologies;
- develop a digital citizenship scope and sequence K-12 complete with instructional examples and resources; and,
- provide teacher training and guidance on the appropriate and acceptable use of these technologies.

Guidelines

In the interim, the following guidelines shall support teachers as they begin to utilize these new technologies to support student achievement.

1. The *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* defines personal information as information about an identifiable or potentially identifiable individual and includes the following:
 - (a) information relating to the race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status of the individual;
 - (b) information relating to the education or the medical, psychiatric, psychological, criminal or employment history of the individual or information relating to financial transactions in which the individual has been involved;
 - (c) any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual (includes photographs);
 - (d) the address, telephone number of the individual;
 - (e) the personal opinions or views of the individual except if they relate to another individual;
 - (f) the views or opinions of another individual about the individual;
 - (g) the individual's name if it appears with other personal information relating to the individual or where the disclosure of the name would reveal other personal information about the individual.
2. Personal information about an identifiable or potentially identifiable individual shall not be posted on the internet (Blogs, Wikis, online social networks or other forms of online discussion and collaboration sites) without the written consent of the parent/guardian or adult student. This includes information that students will be self-posting as part of a class assignment.
3. When seeking consent for posting online, the parent/guardian shall be provided with an overview of the activity which clearly states expectations and guidelines for students. A model Consent to Post Online Form is attached (**FORM 1**). Should a parent/adult student choose not to participate, the teacher shall find a suitable educational alternative for the student.
4. Teachers must also ensure they review and understand website Terms of Use Agreements and/or Privacy Policies to ensure that the selected site is safe and appropriate for use with students. As a best practice, the site name and URL should be included on the consent form to allow parents and students to make informed choices.
5. Block or suppress the display of email address where this capacity exists.

If you have any questions or need assistance please contact Jim Carleton, ICT Consultant at (705) 734-6363 ext. 11211 or jcarleton@scdsb.on.ca or Jaclyn Calder, ICT Consultant at (705) 734-6363 ext. 11840 or jcalder@scdsb.on.ca.