

PERSONNEL

Usage of Social Media

1.0 Objective

- 1.1 This procedure provides guidance and establishes obligations to support the professional and responsible use of social media by DDSB staff. It is part of the DDSB's commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful learning and working environment and is also to support public trust in the DDSB and its staff.
- 1.2 This procedure is to be interpreted and applied in accordance with the District's commitment to promoting and upholding Indigenous rights and human rights in all of its learning and working environments. This includes anti-colonial, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist approaches and actions to provide services and employment that are safe, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, equitable, accessible and free from discrimination and harassment consistent with the DDSB's Indigenous Education Policy, the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy (the "Human Rights Policy"), the Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy and related procedures.

2.0 Definitions

In this procedure,

- 2.1 **Authorized user:** person(s) with access to and permission to post/respond to comments and/or questions on DDSB, department, or official school social media accounts.
- 2.2 **Classroom social media accounts:** accounts operated by DDSB educators for the purpose of sharing day-to-day life and learning in classrooms. The DDSB considers classroom social media accounts to be an extension of the classroom.
- 2.3 **DDSB corporate social media accounts:** the DDSB's main public social media accounts, are run by authorized users in the Communications and Public Relations Department.
- 2.4 **Department social media accounts:** accounts that have been set up by central DDSB departments to relay information and answer public questions about projects and initiatives developed by that department. They may also amplify appropriate messaging from DDSB accounts, schools, and experts.
- 2.5 **Digital Citizenship:** refers to the relationship between an individual and their online presence whereby users recognize the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of social media and living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world, and the responsibility to act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical.
- 2.6 **Personal social media account:** any account that is not owned and operated by the DDSB or a specific school. These include educator accounts not tied to a classroom and any account owned and operated by a single individual. Personal accounts should not be mentioned in DDSB email signatures.

- 2.7 **School social media accounts:** accounts created by the DDSB on a school's behalf, with passwords stored centrally in a secure password-keeper tool to allow for seamless transition between authorized users for the school. School accounts have been set up to relay information and answer public questions about projects and initiatives specific to the school and may amplify appropriate messaging from the DDSB and department accounts, accounts from their family of schools, and experts.
- 2.8 **Social media:** any website or application that allows users to create and share content (text, image, video) or engage in social networking. The types of social media platforms and their uses are continuously evolving.

3.0 Procedure

- 3.1 All DDSB staff using social media shall practice the principles of Digital Citizenship and abide by the additional guidance set out in this procedure.

3.2 Confidentiality

- 3.2.1 Staff shall refrain from publishing school and DDSB confidential information – e.g., school financial information, plans that are in development and other similar information that the DDSB has not made available to the public. If any staff member is uncertain about whether information is confidential, they should inquire with their supervisor.

3.3 Privacy

- 3.3.1 Staff shall not publish personal information about staff, students, parents and guardians and other members of the school community (including images in photos and videos) without explicit informed consent. Photos and videos of students may only be published if a parent or guardian has completed a media consent form.

3.4 Security

- 3.4.1 Staff shall not use a DDSB password with a personal social media or other internet account. Employees are encouraged to use their judgement if they wish to protect their own privacy by using restricted or locked profiles. This can also help unwanted/uninvited messages from strangers on social media. Do not share personal account passwords with others. (Cybersecurity best practice resources are available to all staff via the Spark portal.)

3.5 Accessibility

- 3.5.1 Staff must consider inclusion when creating and/or posting content to any DDSB associated accounts and should employ accessibility best practices in using social media, including by:
- a) adding alternative (alt) text to images, and closed captioning for videos. Many platforms offer an easy-to-use feature (e.g., when you upload a photo to Facebook, click 'edit' in the top left corner, and click 'alternative text' to use the language they supply or add your own).
 - b) staff that post on DDSB social media channels must ensure that they are not posting screenshots or downloading low-quality images (e.g., from inside the body of emails or from online sources) so that images uploaded are high resolution and easy to read.
 - c) where possible, social media messaging should be written in plain language and employing spacing, lists, demonstrative emoji and/or other strategies to ensure that content is

accessible and easy to understand for all audiences. When using hashtags capitalize the first letter of each word (e.g., #SocialMedia).

d) avoiding over-use of emoji (which are read aloud by assistive devices).

3.6 Responsible Use of Personal Accounts

- 3.6.1 While the DDSB respects staff autonomy and personal privacy, staff always have a duty to engage in responsible use of social media. Staff are accountable to the DDSB for what they publish on social media and internet when it is sufficiently connected to the DDSB and/or their DDSB role and it may be considered an extension of the learning and working environment.
- 3.6.2 Staff should ensure their personal profile and personal social media content is consistent with how they wish to appear to colleagues, parents/guardians, and students.
- 3.6.3 Staff shall refrain from publishing content that reflects negatively upon the DDSB, poses a risk of harm to community members, violates the rights of DDSB community members or interferes with the performance of their job duties. Staff should be cautious. Even likes, favorites, shares, retweets and other forms of endorsement can create significant issues.
- 3.6.4 Without such permission, staff shall avoid publishing content to personal social media accounts that may be perceived as a DDSB publication. Staff should consider adding a disclaimer on their personal profiles – i.e., a statement makes clear that their account is personal and not published on behalf of the DDSB.
- 3.6.5 Concerns regarding personal posts from DDSB staff should be sent to the staff member's supervisor or to general.inquiry@ddsb.ca if the individual is unsure of the staff member's supervisor so that the concern can be forwarded.

3.7 Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

- 3.7.1 The DDSB welcomes, values, affirms, and respects the identities of all community members and is committed to meeting its Duty Bearer responsibilities under the Human Rights Policy. It is expected that employees engage through all social media with kindness, dignity, and respect for individuals and respect for other organizations. Any use of social media perceived or intended to attack, libel, threaten, discriminate against, harass, demean, or abuse any member of the DDSB community is unacceptable. This includes posts, comments or images that are racist, faithist (including and not limited to antisemitic or Islamophobic), sexist, ableist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or discriminatory based on any other Human Rights Code protected ground(s).
- 3.7.2 Although the DDSB has a responsibility for providing a safe work environment, it has a limited ability to control what happens online and even more so with personal social media accounts. Here are some suggestions for staff to consider when dealing with online abuse:
 - a) report issue to supervisor if abuse is by another employee, student or community member;
 - b) access mental health supports, including through EFAP;
 - c) disengage and block accounts without delay;
 - d) report abuse to the social media platform;
 - e) consider making accounts private; and

f) inform the police of any threats.

3.8 Communications with Students, Parents, and Guardians

- 3.8.1 Staff shall not use personal social media or personal e-mail accounts to communicate privately with current DDSB students.
- 3.8.2 If staff are contacted by DDSB community members via their personal accounts because of their DDSB role, staff shall respond in a manner that is professional and courteous and maintains professional boundaries.
- 3.8.3 Staff shall not “friend” or “follow” and shall decline friend requests from current DDSB students other than current DDSB students who are family members or family friends.

3.9 DDSB Corporate Social Media Accounts

- 3.9.1 DDSB has established the following corporate social media accounts run by authorized users in the Communications and Public Relations Department:

- Twitter: @DDSBSchools
- Facebook: @DurhamDistrictSchoolBoard
- Instagram: @DDSBSchools

- 3.9.2 Information published on corporate social media accounts shall be consistent with DDSB’s Indigenous Education Policy, Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy and Safe and Respectful Workplace and Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy and related procedures, and positive school climate related procedures.

3.10 DDSB Classroom Accounts

- 3.10.1 Classroom accounts provide an opportunity to share the day-to-day life and learning in classrooms. These accounts may be followed by parents/guardians, educators and community members. The DDSB considers classroom social media accounts and sites as an extension of the classroom. What is inappropriate in the classroom should be deemed inappropriate online.
- 3.10.2 The designated teacher shall be responsible for account configuration and security, educating students about appropriate use and maintaining appropriate use.
- 3.10.3 The designated teacher shall configure the classroom account to prevent the general public from posting messages, images, video and other content.

3.11 DDSB School Accounts

- 3.11.1 School accounts provide a window for parents/guardians and the community to see the life and learning that happens in school each day. A school account is also helpful for communicating messages that relate to the entire school.

- 3.11.2 School accounts shall be expressly authorized by a principal and administered by designated school staff members. Authorizations shall be time limited, and accounts shall be promptly deleted if not longer in use.
- 3.11.3 Biography should identify as a DDSB school.
- 3.11.4 Biography should also include link to official DDSB school website.
- 3.12 [DDSB Department Accounts](#)
- 3.12.1 The designated school staff member shall be responsible for account configuration and security and maintaining appropriate use.
- 3.12.2 Department accounts are created on behalf of a specific department within a school or the Board. Department accounts may be followed by students, parents and others in the community.
- 3.12.3 Department accounts shall be expressly authorized by a principal or supervisor and administered by designated staff members. Authorizations shall be time limited, and accounts shall be promptly deleted if not longer in use.
- 3.12.4 The designated staff member shall be responsible for account configuration and security and maintaining appropriate use.
- 3.13 [Additional Rules for All DDSB Accounts](#)
- 3.13.1 DDSB accounts shall be established using a DDSB e-mail address, a strong password and multi-factor authentication (if made available by the platform). Credentials shall be stored in a secure password keeper that is accessible to the designated staff member and the authorizing principal or supervisor.
- 3.13.2 Accounts shall be identified as a DDSB corporate, classroom, school or department account (as applicable) and include a link to the DDSB website or a DDSB school website (as applicable).
- 3.13.3 Communications on DDSB accounts between staff and students and parents and guardians are encouraged to take place during work hours in line with the Disconnecting from Work Procedure.
- 3.13.4 Staff communications on DDSB accounts shall be professional and courteous and shall maintain professional boundaries.
- 3.13.5 Authorized account users may block or ban a user from viewing a DDSB account for violating the DDSB Social Media Acceptable Use Statement provided they have screen captured the conduct of concern and consulted with the Communications and Public Relations Department. The Communications and Public Relations Department shall maintain a database of banned users with a record of evidence (including screen-captured images).
- 3.13.6 Decisions to remove posts or close comments to a post may be made by the designated staff member or authorizing principal or supervisor. All posts that center identity shall have comments turned off.
- 3.13.7 Staff wishing to use Facebook or YouTube-like applications as a method of communicating with the broader community for Board purposes must ensure that they have received permission from their school administrator or supervisor and provided their supervisor with any passwords and access to these sites.

3.14 Protecting the DDSB Brand

- 3.14.1 Brand standards have been developed for DDSB social media accounts (Appendix A) to create uniformity and ease of understanding for community members. New account names should be developed in consultation with the Communications and Public Relations Department to ensure clarity. DDSB staff endeavour to ensure that questions and comments are responded to through the posting account, as an official source of information.

3.15 Social Media/Online Content Issues Management

- 3.15.1 While social media presents a number of positive opportunities, there are times when social media issues can emerge both inside and outside of the classroom and workplace.
- 3.15.2 In the event of a social media issue or concern involving a DDSB account, staff should consider the following:
- a) taking screenshots;
 - b) reporting abuse to the social media platform;
 - c) reporting to a principal or supervisor;
 - d) seeking help from a Superintendent and the Communications and Public Relations Department.

3.16 Consequences

- 3.16.1 In circumstances where the conduct of a staff member is a violation of above procedure, the appropriate supervisor, in consultation with People and Culture, may impose discipline as to the circumstances. For some employee groups, the District may also have obligations to report substantiated findings of discrimination or harassment to applicable employee professional associations and colleges.
- 3.16.2 The principles of progressive discipline and proportionality will be applied in dealing with any discipline. Discipline could include, but not limited to:
- Verbal warning;
 - Written reprimand;
 - Suspension without pay;
 - Termination of employment.
- 3.16.3 The decision as to discipline may include a recommendation for professional learning, counselling or coaching support.

4.0 DDSB Social Media Acceptable Use Statement

- 4.1 The following DDSB Social Media Acceptable Use Statement covers all official DDSB social media accounts and must be posted on the DDSB website and periodically linked to on main DDSB social media accounts:

The DDSB is actively engaged on social media channels including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to foster transparency, community relationships and engagement through two-way communication with students, parents, guardians, and our community, as well as providing opportunity for helpful learning and teaching practices.

We welcome feedback about our schools and services, which can be sent to a students' school administration, superintendent, or through General.Inquiry@ddsb.ca. Not all feedback or comments posted to our social media can or will be responded to, however, all are read, and themes are relayed to the appropriate staff for action.

The DDSB reserves the right to remove or block comments, content, and users deemed to be expressing discrimination (e.g., based on ancestry, race, sex, disability, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, creed/religion or other Human Rights Code protected grounds), hate, or are harassing, offensive, abusive, inappropriate, or inflammatory.

5.0 Reference Documents

- 5.1 Policies
Indigenous Education Policy
Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Policy
Safe and Respectful Workplace and Workplace Harassment Prevention Policy
- 5.2 Procedures
Classroom Teaching and Learning
Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, and Anti-Racism Procedure
Human Rights Roles, Responsibility and Accountability Framework
Complaints Procedure – Human Rights, Safe and Respectful Workplace and Workplace Harassment Prevention Procedure
Disconnecting from Work Procedure
- 5.3 Other Documents
Ontario College of Teachers Maintaining Professionalism – Use of Electronic Communications and Social Media Professional Advisory

Appendix:

Appendix A: DDSB Social Media Account Brand Standards

Effective Date

2023-10-31

Amended

YYYY-MM-DD

Appendix A - DDSB Social Media Account Brand Standards

Naming Convention

New account names should be developed in consultation with the Communications and Public Relations Department to ensure clarity. Social media channel names for schools and departments should be as consistent as possible, both across platforms as well as throughout the system, where possible. Names should be clear, easy to understand what the account represents, and as easy to remember as possible.

An easy to remember formula that can be followed is <School Name>+<PS/HS/CVI> or <DDSB>+<Department or Short Form>.

Some examples include:

- @RosemaryBrownPS (Twitter, Instagram)
- @GoodwoodPS (Twitter, Instagram)
- @GLRobertsCVI (Twitter, Instagram)
- @DDSBAtHomeK (Twitter)
- @DDSBSchools (Twitter, Instagram)
- @DDSBStaffDev (Twitter)

In situations where the preferred account name is already taken, schools and departments should work with Communications and Public Relations to select a username that best follows the naming convention and is clear to understand.

Plus Addressing

What is Plus Addressing?

Known officially as sub-addressing, plus addressing delivers email in a particular way so that you can better organize and identify incoming email.

Within the context of creating social media accounts for school departments, school programs, Education Centre departments or any other school social media presence, plus addressing is the method that will be used to sign up for additional social media platforms.

Example 1

A school has a general mailbox with an email address of <SchoolNamePS/HS/CVI@ddsb.ca>.

When signing up for a social media account (for your school department/program or Education Centre department), instead of using the general school mailbox email address (e.g., GLRobertsCVI@ddsb.ca), you will add a plus sign (+) and the department/program the account will be associated with, to the email address.

The following template for the email address will be used:
<SchoolNamePS/HS/CVI+Athletics@ddsb.ca>.

Example: <GLRobertsCVI+Athletics@ddsb.ca>

The result of using plus addressing is as follows:

- All emails from the social media platform will be sent to the mailbox. The plus address works like an alias for a mailbox.

In most cases emails sent from the social media platform will be to validate an email address used for signing up to a social media platform or for any password reset related to the social media account.

- You will notice that when you open up the email sent from the social media platform, the email address it was sent to should be (plus address used to sign up)

Example 2

A school requires a social media account for the Performing Arts department.

Requirements: Access to the mailbox.

Plus Addressing to be used:

- GLRobertsCVI+PerformingArts@ddsb.ca

Steps:

1. Sign up with social media platform using the plus address email.
2. Verification email from the social media platform will be sent to the mailbox.
3. When you open the email from the social media platform, you will see the email addressed to the plus address used to sign up.
4. **Action Required** – Authorized user(s) that have access to the mailbox, can forward the email to the corresponding department person(s) responsible for managing the social media account.

For more information on how to create a Plus Addressing account please reach out to the Communications Department at Communications.Department@ddsb.ca.

Use of Logos

School, department, and DDSB logos should be exclusively used as profile pictures for all social media platforms. Sizing for these images is provided below. Examples of acceptable use of the DDSB logo can be found in the [Corporate Identity Standards Handbook](#).

Voice

All DDSB social media accounts should maintain an overall positive and compassionate tone, reflective of DDSB customer service standards, and focusing on sharing timely information (events, happenings, etc.) and student success stories in order to support families and students.

DDSB staff shall endeavor to ensure that questions and comments are responded to through the posting account, as an official source of information.

Images

Images shared and/or amplified via DDSB social media accounts (corporate, departmental, school, or classroom accounts) should be carefully considered. The image should have a clear connection to the topic of the post (event or promotion, date of significance, etc.) and must be selected to reflect positively on the account and overall DDSB brand.

Pictures posted of students should be approved by way of the parental consent form signed at the beginning of each school year.

If you want to name students in the photos, we strongly suggest using first name only for all students.

Pictures of students faces should not be blurred out. If unsure whether or not a student is approved to have their image on social media, do not post the image.

Imagery Guidance/Visual Branding:

Imagery should reflect and uphold the DDSB's commitment to centering Indigenous Rights and human rights in all we do.

- Where images showing people (including students for which media consent forms have been signed by parents/guardians) are used, the person responsible for the image and/or posting should consider all facets of inclusion (identity, ability, etc.). Depictions of people, activities and events in images should comply with section 1.2 of this procedure and with all other DDSB policies and procedures (for example, the Student Dress Code Policy).
- Images should look professional and clean. Staff are encouraged to contact Creative Services for assistance producing or altering images for social media feeds.
- Alternate (alt) text should be applied.
- Typeface for imagery should be clear and easy to read. San serif fonts are recommended. Examples of commonly available sans serif fonts include Arial, Calibri, Helvetica, Tahoma, Verdana.
- Text on images should be limited where possible.

Image Sizing (for reference purposes)

- Twitter
 - Profile Picture - 400x400 pixels
 - Header photo - 1500x500 pixels
 - Post image -1200x675 pixels
- Facebook
 - Profile Picture - 170x170 pixels
 - Banner - 851x315 pixels
 - Post image - 1200x630 pixels
- Instagram
 - Profile Picture - 320x320 pixels
 - Post image - 1080 x 1080 pixels
 - Story/Reels image 1080x1920 pixels