

Title: Communications Policy

Adopted: November 16, 1970

Effective: November 16, 1970

Amended/Reviewed: February 18, 2026

1.0 RATIONALE

Effective, timely, and accessible communication is essential to advancing student achievement and well-being, strengthening relationships with internal and external DDSB communities, and maintaining public trust and confidence in public education and supporting the identification, prevention, and removal of communication-related accessibility barriers.

The Durham District School Board (District) is committed to two-way communication that is proactive, responsive, open, and transparent. Together, these communications contribute to the DDSB's brand — the shared identity, voice, and reputation of the District as experienced by its communities. Communication that is undertaken with honesty and integrity is integral to purposeful discussions. These principles support informed decision-making, meaningful engagement, and confidence in the District's governance and operations.

This policy establishes clear governance direction for communications in alignment with the DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan, legislative requirements, and the District's commitments to Indigenous rights and human rights and responsibilities. This includes recognition of Indigenous People as rights-holders, accessibility, and inclusive and safe learning and working environments. As well as recognizing that communications must also respect privacy, confidentiality, and the safety and well-being of students and staff.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

- The objective of this policy is to establish clear governance and direction for internal and external communications across the Durham District School Board by:
 - Promoting coordinated, accurate, timely, and accessible communications
 - Clarifying roles, responsibilities, and accountability for communications at the District, senior administration, and operational levels
 - Supporting transparency, trust, and meaningful engagement with DDSB communities
 - Ensuring communications practices align with legislative requirements and the District's commitments to Indigenous rights and human rights, equity, accessibility, and well-being

- Supporting a consistent and coherent DDSB brand by reinforcing a shared identity, voice, and reputation through aligned communications practices

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Communications:

The exchange of information, messages, or ideas, verbally, visually, or in writing, through internal and external channels on behalf of the Durham District School Board, including print and digital formats and platforms.

3.2 DDSB Communities:

Students, families, staff, trustees, education partners, and members of the public.

4.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Establishing governance and direction for communications through this policy
- Approving, revising, or rescinding this policy in accordance with the Policy Development Process

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Overall implementation of this policy and accountability for communications undertaken on behalf of the District
- Providing leadership and direction to ensure communications across the system align with Board direction, legislative requirements, and the principles set out in this policy
- Establishing and maintaining procedures to operationalize this policy

5.0 APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all Durham District School Board trustees and staff and to all communications undertaken on behalf of the District.

This policy applies to internal and external communications at the system, school, and departmental levels, including communications with DDSB communities.

This policy shall be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with applicable legislation, Board policies, and procedures.

6.0 POLICY STATEMENT

The District shall strive to ensure that communications undertaken on its behalf reflect the following principles and expectations:

- 6.1** Communications are intended to support the District's mission, values, and Multi-Year Strategic Plan, and to contribute to student achievement, well-being, and inclusive learning and working environments.

- 6.2** Communications should be accurate, timely, clear, and non-partisan, and support trust, understanding, and confidence in public education.
- 6.3** Communications should be accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of DDSB communities, support the identification, prevention, and removal of communication-related accessibility barriers, and be consistent with the District's commitments to Indigenous rights and human rights and responsibilities.
- 6.4** Communications should respect privacy, confidentiality, and applicable legislative requirements.
- 6.5** Communications should be coordinated across the system to support consistency, clarity, appropriate sequencing of internal and external messaging, and a coherent DDSB brand.

7.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

- Only the Board of Trustees may adopt, revise, or rescind this policy.
- The Director of Education is authorized to establish, maintain, and update procedures to operationalize this policy.
- This policy is intended to be interpreted and applied in accordance with applicable legislation, Board policies, and established procedures.
- The Board and the Director shall strive to ensure that this policy is interpreted, applied, and implemented in ways that uphold Indigenous rights and human rights and responsibilities, promote accessibility, and prevent and address discrimination and discriminatory barriers.
- Communications procedures are intended to be developed and implemented in a manner consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and any current or future applicable accessibility standards or legislative requirements.
- Where substantive changes to communications practices are contemplated, they are intended to be supported by appropriate consultation and informed by Indigenous rights and human rights principles and responsibilities.
- This policy shall be reviewed at least every five years, or earlier if required by legislative, regulatory, or Board-directed change.

8.0 EVALUATION

This policy shall be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with DDSB's strategic priorities and legislative requirements.

9.0 COMMUNICATION

All policies shall be published on the DDSB public website in an accessible format and shared with relevant DDSB community members and education partners, in accordance with applicable accessibility standards.

10.0 REFERENCES

- Education Act
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- DDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- DDSB Accessibility Policy