

Administrative Procedure 146

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

Background

Social media platforms are a growing part of everyday life for our Black Gold families and communities. The Division supports knowledgeable and responsible use of social media as an effective way to advance the values and reputation of the Black Gold School Division (BGSD) and Black Gold Schools (BGS). Engaging in digital environments can encourage communication and promote learning, teaching, and collaboration for students, staff, parents, and the wider school community.

Our Philosophy

The use of social media is a complementary communication tool to be used alongside the more direct communication channels available to the Division and its schools.

Social media should not be a substitute for direct communication or for what the Division views as the primary source of sharing information, which would be official emails and the Division Office and school websites. Social media should be used to enrich these websites and to highlight the Division and its schools.

Social media is not intended for the Division, schools, and staff to discuss contentious, emotional, or highly confidential issues, or to share disinformation or misinformation. These issues should be dealt with face-to-face or by phone.

Users of social media should also consult the Division's general guidelines (Guidelines for Staff & Personal Use; Guidelines for Using School Social Media Accounts; Guidelines for Principals; Guidelines for Students; Guidelines for Parents) for best practices around using social media.

Definitions

Social Media: A collection of online platforms and tools that people use to share images, photos and video content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives to facilitate conversations, engagement and interactions online between groups of people.

Digital Citizenship: The concept of educating technology users about appropriate and effective use of technology, and not to misuse it to disadvantage others.

Live Streaming: Means to broadcast live video content (e.g. Board meetings, special Division, or school events) on the internet as it happens.

Social Media Managers: Staff that have administrative access to social media sites and are responsible for: managing administrative permissions for their sites; developing and implementing their site's social media strategy; and monitoring for positive or negative feedback.

Additional Affiliated Accounts: Social media accounts affiliated with the school where the content focuses on a specific department, group, subject, classroom, etc. and are considered an extension of the school (e.g. . EBMS Grade 3 Facebook Group, CSSMec10 Twitter, LCHS Athletics Facebook). These accounts can be categorized in three ways:

1. **Push/Broadcast Accounts:** One-way communication from account to audience or an information portal that is not interactive and does not allow for users to post comments or content (e.g blogs, wikis, podcasts, etc).
2. **Learning Interactive/Engagement Accounts:** Public or private accounts used for a learning activity that has a designated start and end time, i.e. Facebook community engagement project, etc.
3. **Every-day Interactive / Engagement Classroom / Instructional Accounts:** Everyday use social media accounts that allow for two-way communication between the account and audience that is interactive and allows for users to post comments, questions, or content (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest).

Blog: A word that was created from two words: “web log.” Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or a business with regular entries of content on a specific topic, descriptions of events, or other resources such as graphics or video. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

Social Media Monitoring: Social media monitoring is a process of monitoring and responding to mentions related to a business or organization that occur in social media.

Procedures

For Student Use:

1. Students shall follow all school rules, behavioural expectations and the Student Code of Conduct when using social media in accordance with the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship Through Admirable Use Agreement*.
2. Student use of social media accounts, whether personal or instructional based, during class time shall be at the discretion of the school principal and teacher, respectively.
3. Students are encouraged to maintain their privacy settings to the highest level of security and obtain guidance from an adult when altering security settings.
4. Live streaming is only permitted during public events at the discretion of the school principal and teacher, respectively.

For Staff Use, Account Administration and Monitoring

1. Student safety and supervision are top priorities. Staff use of social media and online activities must not interfere with student safety, the performance of their job, or their effectiveness as an employee of the Division. Staff use of social media must respect Division time and resources.
2. Staff shall use their personal (non-Division) email account when accessing/creating a personal social media account. It is recommended that staff do not self-identify as BGSD employees on their personal accounts.

3. All Division and school accounts (including additional affiliated accounts such as classroom or instructional accounts) must reflect the mission, vision and values of BGSD.
4. All Division and school Social Media Managers should familiarize themselves with each social media tool's privacy settings. Settings can change without notice, often when platforms are updated, and need to be checked frequently.
5. Division-based social media accounts shall be administered and monitored by the BGSD Communications Advisor or designate. Staff are authorized to use social media accounts to represent the Division only with documented permission of the BGSD Communications Department and must forward the login information about all social media accounts created to the Communications Advisor.
6. The BGSD Communications Advisor will also be a Social Media Manager on all Division and school accounts to be used in the event of an emergency. Social Media Managers should email socialmedia@blackgold.ca for further instructions on granting access to Communications.
7. School-based social media accounts are optional. These accounts shall be administered and monitored by at least two Social Media Managers, including at least one school administrator.
 - 7.1 It is recommended that main school-based social media accounts be utilized as much as possible instead of creating multiple accounts.
 - 7.2 Staff are not authorized to use social media accounts to represent a school (including departments, classrooms, sports teams, etc.) or create additional affiliated accounts (i.e., classroom or instructional accounts) without documented permission of their principal.
 - 7.2.1 These accounts are extensions of the school and naming conventions should be reflective of such.
 - 7.2.2 Please ensure that login credentials of school-based social media accounts are shared with the Communications Department.
8. All Division and school accounts must be monitored by a Social Media Manager regularly to ensure no inappropriate comments have been posted.
 - 8.1 Just like school websites, social media accounts may be more extensive and more frequently updated than others based on school priorities. There is no expectation that a Division or school social media account is monitored 24/7. However, all Division and school accounts must have a Terms of Use disclaimer that defines when the account is monitored and what to do if help is needed (see Appendix B).
 - 8.2 Social Media Managers reserve the right to delete or remove any posting, photo, comment, or mentions that violate the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship through Admirable Use Agreement* or any other BGSD policies, or share disinformation or misinformation, is degrading, discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive in any manner.
 - 8.3 Social Media Managers should use professional judgement to determine if it is necessary to report a post or comment to the school administration or the Communications Advisor for further investigation.

- 8.4 Where warranted, comments on these accounts should be responded to by Social Media Managers.
9. All users have a responsibility to report and seek assistance from the principal if they see something of concern, such as aggressive or hateful comments, bullying or an individual at risk. The school, with support from the Division Office, is responsible for implementing response and prevention strategies, and if necessary, involving law enforcement.

For Content & Posting

1. The Division and schools shall teach and promote digital citizenship through the use of the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship through Admirable Use Agreement* and the BGSD Social Media Guidelines.
2. All users are responsible for the content/information they publish online.
3. ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders (Government of Alberta, December 7, 2022). Non-ATA members shall follow the rules and expectations outlined in BGSD's Administrative Procedures Manual. All staff shall adhere to the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship through Admirable Use Agreement*.
4. The use of Division logos on social media sites shall be used on Division social media applications only unless documented permission has been received from the Division Communications Department.
5. All users must adhere to federal copyright and fair use guidelines.
6. Hyperlinked content must be appropriate and educationally beneficial or adhere to Administrative Procedure 153 – Advertising and Distribution of Materials.
7. Live streaming is only permitted during public events.
8. Safety is the overriding concern regarding information posted online. All information shared on Division and school social media accounts is subject to applicable federal and provincial legislation and Division policies and procedures at all times, including the *BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship Through Admirable Use Agreement*.
 - 8.1 Users of Division and school social media accounts should not disclose any Division or School information or content that they are not specifically authorized to disclose.
 - 8.2 Users shall not disclose confidential or personal information as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* without first obtaining written consent from the parent/guardian, or the student if age 18 or over. The posting of full names, addresses, pictures, videos, and audio recordings that allow the identification of individuals must have signed consent. Questions about FOIP can be directed to the Human Resources Department.
 - 8.3 Consent related to teacher blogs/wikis and school and Division social media applications are provided via the Collection/Use of Student Information Form 180-2 that is to be completed by all parents/guardians at the start of the school year.
 - 8.4 Consent is not provided for personal accounts, personal blended accounts or individual professional accounts, e.g. Mrs. Brown's LinkedIn Account, MrsBrownTeaches Twitter Account.
 - 8.5 Information about events that are public can be posted on the Division and school social media accounts prior to the events taking place.

- 8.6 Information posted on the Division and school social media accounts about private events, field trips, or extracurricular activities should not include the time and location, e.g., Grade 9 Science Trip on April 7.
- 8.7 Care must be taken with students with identified custody/safety concerns.
9. Errors on social media can occur, however they should be acknowledged and corrected quickly and forthrightly. Social Media Managers should seek assistance from their principal or the BGSD Communications Department to determine the best course of action.

Training

1. On an ongoing basis, the Division Communications Department and/or Technology Department will provide professional development training and guidelines on the effective and safe use of social media, relating to the Division Social Media Guidelines.

Emergency and Crisis Situations

1. In the event of an emergency or crisis, Social Media Managers and staff are asked to share only official information provided by the Division social media accounts and shared in official Division messages such as email, news releases, etc. Any information on an emergency being pushed out by Division accounts originates with the Emergency Operations Centre and may be considered official public information. Information from unofficial or unverified sources should not be shared.
2. In an emergency, all scheduled tweets/regular news items should be stopped/turned off.
3. All Division and school social media accounts may be used in crisis communication by the Emergency Operations Centre or Administrative Command Team's (ACT) Information Officer/ Division Communications Department.

References: Section 31, 33, 52, 53, 68, 196, 204, 222, 225 Education Act
Administrative Procedure 153 – Advertising and Distribution of Materials
Aspen View Public School Division Social Media Guidelines for Staff
BGSD Responsible Digital Citizenship through Admirable Use Agreement
Brock University Social Media Guidelines
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Criminal Code
Copyright Act
Edmonton Catholic Schools Social Media Guidelines for Schools
EIPS Social Media Guidelines
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Government of Alberta Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and Teacher Leaders
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
Peel District School Board Social Media Guidelines for Staff
Personal Information Protection Act
University of Alberta Social Media Guidelines
University of Lethbridge Social Media Guidelines
Wild Rose School Division Social Media Guidelines