

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION:	100 – GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	CODE:	AP 147
PROCEDURE:	EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA		

BACKGROUND

Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools recognizes that the appropriate use of social media in education can create new ways to enhance and extend the education experience of students. Social media can assist school employees and families to communicate for a variety of reasons such as accessing homework, assignments, and notification of special events. The Division also recognizes the importance of freedom of opinion, discussions, and sharing of information and supports interactions that reflect the mission and vision of the Division. However, the most popular social media applications were not developed for the purpose of education and can expose employees to unfortunate risks. All online identities and actions are visible to the public and as the number of channels of communication in society increase so does the rate of misuse. Professional boundaries can blur. Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of communication is vital to maintaining public trust and appropriate relationships with students.

It is the responsibility of all employees of Christ the Teacher RCSSD to understand and exercise appropriate relations with students, families, members of the school community, and Board Employees, even when such persons initiate electronic interaction.

This administrative procedure is designed to provide all Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools employees with guidelines regarding the appropriate use of Social Media outlets such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, YouTube, blogs, wikis, podcasts, etc. This procedure is in place for the protection of privacy, confidentiality and interests of all employees and the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division. Employees are ambassadors for the division and will conduct themselves online in a professional and positive manner. Violation of this procedure exposes the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division to risks and legal liability and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Definitions:

Employees – All staff, including but not limited to: Board members, professional teaching staff, substitute teachers, support staff, educational assistants, administrative staff, maintenance staff, and student teachers placed at Christ the Teacher RCSSD #212.

Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies that turn communication into interactive dialogue. Some examples include but are not limited to: personal websites, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, YouTube, blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video and other social media technologies.

Guiding Principles

The division has established the following guiding principles for responsible use of social media:

- **Intended use:** Board technology is provided for educational and administrative purposes. Technology should be used for these intended purposes only.
- All communication with the public, students, and parents is professional communication.
- Private vs. Professional: There is a distinction between the profession and private life of a teacher, however, teaching is a public profession, and members should conduct themselves in a professional matter at all times both in their personal and professional lives. **Employees of our school division hold positions of trust and are held to a higher standard of behaviour than other members of the public** (see [Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15](#)).

PROCEDURES

General Use:

1. As defined by the [Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy \(LAFOIP\) Act](#), users shall not disclose personal, sensitive or confidential information without prior written consent. Professionalism, privacy, transparency, or respect must not be compromised.
2. Unless authorized, employees shall not use social media to represent any school or department in Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division. Any such work-related, division, or school level account requires approval by a supervisor or administrator and must be reflective of the mission, vision, and values of the Division. Accounts created must be registered with the Information Technology Department; a directory of all accounts will be maintained by the Information Technologist and where applicable, should be designated as a supplementary Administrator of the account (for account recovery, staff changes, and account re-assigning and/or stale account deletion).
3. Approved accounts must clearly and concisely identify the school, program, club, or association name. Do not generalize with the use of CTTCs, as this may imply communication on behalf of the entire Division.
4. Any social media account established under Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division is subject to review, monitoring, and deactivation if such accounts are deemed to violate acceptable use.
5. Each school that develops a social media account must designate a content manager who will take responsibility for management of the page. Accounts must be monitored to ensure material posted does not violate Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division policies and procedures.
6. Social media must be used in a responsible, ethical, and legal manner, appropriate to an educational setting. Users must be aware of, and comply with copyright laws and privacy settings.
7. Account managers or administrators who have developed Social Media accounts must communicate with parents, students, and staff the Division's expectations for responsible use and appropriate behaviours, citing guidelines as outlined and encourage discussions about appropriate use of Social Media.

8. Any defamatory personal, school level or Division level content that negatively impacts the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division is deemed unacceptable and violates acceptable use as indicated in Administrative Procedure 140.
9. Social media sites including, but not exclusive to Facebook and Twitter, as well as blogs, discussion forums, and wikis, are subject to the Administrative Procedure and may be reviewed as the need arises.

Personal Use:

1. Unless work related or otherwise authorized by a supervisor or administrator, it is unacceptable to use Social Media accounts during work hours. Employees must keep their outside interests and activities, including, but not limited to, the maintenance, access or use of a personal blog or social networking website, outside the workplace. These should not adversely affect instructional time and preparation time.
2. Although staff lead private lives, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that teachers' off-duty conduct, even when not directly related to students, is relevant to their suitability to teach. In [Ross v. New Brunswick School District No. 15](#), [1996] 1 S.C.R. 825 at page 856, the Supreme Court stated:

“Teachers are inextricably linked to the integrity of the school system. Teachers occupy positions of trust and confidence, and exert considerable influence over their students as a result of their positions. The conduct of a teacher bears directly upon the community’s perception of the ability of the teacher to fulfil such a position of trust and influence, and upon the community’s confidence in the public school system as a whole.”

As such, staff should use sound judgement and due care when using social media on and off duty. There are examples of employees in various sectors whose employment has been impacted by their personal use of social media.

3. The manner and way in which CTTCS staff members communicate with students, parents, and the community shapes public perception. Statements like, “Tweets are my own and don’t reflect my employer’s views” don’t hold true for CTTCS employees. Staff should use social media with the same professionalism and responsibility as they would when officially representing the Board.
4. Employees understand they have no expectation of privacy in their use of the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division’s systems, including the Internet and school division email.
5. Employee publications including, but not limited to, postings on blogs and social networking websites, must not negatively impact the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division’s reputation. Any such materials that are insulting, demeaning, or offensive to the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division, its employees or its affiliates, or that are deemed objectionable by the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division in that their content might damage the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division’s reputation will violate this procedure. As an employee, you can at any time be perceived as an unofficial spokesperson of the Division. Do not use your personal account as a public forum to interact on behalf of the Division. Your online behaviour should be appropriate for a Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division stakeholder and should not undermine your credibility or that of the School Division.

- a. Employees must not include any information which the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division deems sensitive or confidential information related to the Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division.
 - b. Employees will ensure they never post criticism of—or share confidential information about—colleagues, students or the division.
6. All employees must recognize that they are legally liable for anything they write or present online. Employees can be disciplined by the division for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, harassing, or that can create a hostile work environment.
7. Employees should ensure they familiarize themselves with the social media site’s privacy policy and activate the appropriate privacy settings.
8. Any employee’s personal account may not be appropriate to distribute Division related news. Contact your Administrator if there is important news to be shared.
9. Establish professional boundaries. Be cognizant of the type of “friendships” that are formed on your personal account and conversations that vent frustrations about your personal or professional life.

School/Classroom Use:

1. Staff members planning to use a social media site (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, blogs, wikis, etc.) as a teaching or communication tool in a classroom must complete and submit the “Social Media Site Approval” Form 147.1 to their Administrator for authorization. The use and application of the site must be well documented and a proven part of an instruction plan for it to be approved. Once approval is granted, contact the Information Technologist for support in the appropriate implementation of the social media site.
2. Staff members who are using social media that will mention Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division and/or our employees, students and parents, must identify that they are an employee of the Division and that the views expressed in social media are theirs alone and do not represent the views of Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division.
3. A Facebook page, a Twitter account or a blog (or other social networking site) may be used as a teaching tool in a classroom. Student permission forms (Student Social Media Release) are required to be used by classroom teachers in the event of the use of a blog, Facebook page, etc. The form advises the parent/guardian of the classroom-applicable use of the social media site. Parent/guardian signatures must be collected and maintained indicating awareness and approval for a student to take part.
4. All copyright laws must be adhered to. Staff members with questions about usage of certain Media should contact their Administrator.
5. Staff members may not share confidential information about individual students, grades, or any other information that has not been publicly released by the school or Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division.
6. Schools and teachers are expected to comply with the terms of use of the social media site they are using in the school/classroom.

7. The use of any collected student information (ie Facebook name, email address) is considered personal and private information under the *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This information is to be kept confidential and is not to be shared with other staff unless permission has been granted by the parent/guardian to do so.

Reference:

1. Legal Reference: Cybertips For Teachers, Canadian Teachers Federation
2. Ontario North East District School Board: Policy No. 1.2.1
3. Professional Advisory: Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media, The Council of the Ontario College of Teachers available online at <http://www.oct.ca/resources/advisories/use-of-electronic-communication-and-social-media>
4. Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (LAFOIPP)
<http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/L27-1.pdf>
5. Social Media Site Approval Form ____
6. Student Permission Form ____

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