



## **BD-2021 Communications Procedure**

**Approval Date: 2019**

**Review Date: 2024**

### **1. Purpose**

BD-2020 Communications Policy.

### **2. References and Related Documents**

Internal

- BD-2031 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Procedure
- BD-2071 Emergency Response Plan – District Procedure
- BD-2500 Publishing Standards Procedure
- BU-3036 Appropriate Use of Digital Technology, Content, and Services Procedure
- BD-3066 Advertising Procedure

### **3. Terms and Definitions**

**Message Map:** A one page document containing key messages and all supporting information on a particular issue, concern, or emergency. A message map is used to provide key messaging to spokespersons and to those who need to share information with staff and school community members around an issue.

**Our Dock:** The TLDSB staff intranet which is an internal portal providing email, resources, and staff updates.

**Notification System:** A platform whereby TLDSB staff can communicate with a specific group of people (e.g. all parents of one school, or all parents of some schools, or all schools) via email, text, and/or phone.

### **4. Administrative Procedure**

#### **4.1. Communication**

Communication with TLDSB stakeholders (students, teachers, staff, administrators, Trustees, parents/guardians, community members) requires professional, regular, clear, and concise messaging. This includes communications such as email, internal documents, parent letters, school newsletters, notification systems, social media, and more. Every effort will be made to adapt communication methods to a variety of audience styles and capacities.

##### **4.1.1. Corporate Communications**

Using a multimedia approach, the Communications Services Department will identify opportunities to communicate with all stakeholders and oversee or provide guidance for the development of messaging and communication tactics produced for internal and external audiences.

Using the TLDSB visual identity (logo), the Communications Services Department will ensure that all printed and electronic communications as well as all promotional items share a common look, signifying unity and reinforcing the Board's image.

The Communications Services Department will develop email and social media guidelines that will be reviewed on a regular basis as required.

#### **4.1.2. Central Offices**

Central Offices will be referred to as:

- HCEC – Haliburton County Education Centre
- LEC – Lindsay Education Centre
- MEC – Muskoka Education Centre

Procedures for the use of phone systems, email systems, social media (see appendix 5.1), and other forms of communication will be available to all TLDSB staff. TLDSB staff members are responsible for being knowledgeable about procedures including use of the telephone system, intranet, email, social media, and other templates, forms, and tools.

Staff development in communications skills will be available to all central office staff through the Communications Services Department

As a primary communication tool for TLDSB, all employees are provided with a First Class email account and are required to check email communication regularly.

#### **4.1.3. Schools**

Schools have particular communication needs that extend beyond the scope of the central offices.

Every effort will be made to ensure that an effective flow of information to and from each school is fostered.

Schools will communicate regularly with parents and their school community using a variety of communications tools including the school website, school newsletter, notification systems, and social media.

#### **4.1.4. Board of Trustees**

Trustees are key communicators for the Board and will be kept informed of impending or current issues, concerns, and/or emergencies.

Trustees will be provided with a message map on issues that may prompt significant public attention.

Trustees will be copied on all media releases.

### **4.2. Public Relations**

Public relations help to establish a positive reputation for the school board, and are where partnerships with community members, agencies, and governments are fostered.

#### **4.2.1. Community Relations**

Wherever possible, the Communications Services Department will develop relationships with key community members within the district to foster an ongoing dialogue which provides information to the community and allows community members to provide feedback to the school board.

#### **4.2.2. Media Relations**

Wherever possible, the Communications Services Department will develop relationships with key community members within the district to foster an ongoing dialogue which provides information to the community and allows community members to provide feedback to the school board.

The Communications Services Department will foster transparent positive partnerships with media representatives and provide guidance to staff on how to handle inquiries and respond to difficult situations.

The Communications Department will post current stories to the TLDSB website, issue media releases and/or update social media applications when newsworthy events, decisions, or issues arise.

The Communications Services Department will respond in a timely fashion to all media requests, by providing access to accurate, factual information.

The spokesperson for the Board's operational items is the Director of Education or designate.

The spokesperson for governance items is the Chairperson or designate

### **4.3. Communications Advisory Committee**

#### **4.3.1. Communications Advisory Committee Membership**

The Communications Advisory Committee Membership may include the following representation:

- Communications Services Department staff
- One trustee, appointed by the Board
- One senior administrator
- One elementary principal or vice principal
- One secondary principal or vice principal
- One elementary teacher
- One secondary teacher
- One school secretary
- Others as invited by the committee as needed

As communications feedback needs arise, the Communications Advisory Committee will seek input from various work groups and stakeholders.

#### **4.3.2. Media Relations**

The committee will provide feedback to the Communications Services Department on the following items:

- An annual set of goals and timelines for achieving them
- Revisions to Communications policy / procedure including Publishing Standards
- Relevant issues
- Promotional campaigns

### **4.3.3. Meeting Frequency**

Meetings will be held a minimum of twice each year. A schedule for meetings will be established in the fall.

### **4.4. Crisis and Emergency Communication**

The Communications Services Department will be available to assist schools in any communication to parents and the public during and following any emergency or crisis situations.

The Communications District Manager of Corporate Communications is responsible for all media relations regarding school and board related emergencies and will work in cooperation with emergency services representatives (police, fire) around responses or statements to the media.

All crisis and emergency related media releases must receive the approval of the Director of Education before they are released to the media by the Communications Services Department

## **5. Appendices**

### **5.1. Social Media Guidelines**

**If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact Communications Services at [info@tldsbc.on.ca](mailto:info@tldsbc.on.ca).**

## TLDSB Social Media Guidelines – Grow the Good

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Online social networks provide opportunities for our school communities to share information quickly and broadly. There is an opportunity and a need to show the good in social media by sharing all the good things that Trillium Lakelands District School Board staff, students, and school communities do to have a positive local, national, and global impact. To grow the good, it is important to reflect our TLDSB mission "better together in a safe and caring learning community" when using social media. Social media is about connecting TLDSB to something larger – it's about people, not tools.

As a member of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board community, you will have the opportunity to interact and communicate using social media tools – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The school board has a Facebook page as well as a Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram feed. All schools have the opportunity to have a Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram account.

Social media is about conversations, community, and building relationships – platforms to connect with staff, students, parents, and the school community. Social media is a 'many to many' networking tool offering a different level of engagement than more traditional forms of communication.

We will update and monitor our Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram accounts during regular office hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

### **Guidelines**

These guidelines have been developed to ensure appropriate and effective use of social media within and for Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Following these social media guidelines will ensure that Trillium Lakelands District School Board is represented in a positive, accurate, and transparent manner.

The first step when engaging in Trillium Lakelands DSB social media is to review the BU-3036 Appropriate Use of Information/Communication Technology and Technology Services procedure.

The following information will be available on all social media platforms created by Trillium Lakelands DSB.

#### Terms of Use Guidelines for Social Media

Trillium Lakelands District School Board encourages open and engaging conversation. We ask that you express any concerns, ideas, or thoughts in a respectful, family-friendly manner. Comments that do not follow the guidelines below will be removed and/or blocked from this page.

Obscene or disrespectful comments or posts will not be allowed. Comments that are abusive, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization will not be permitted.

We reserve the right to delete comments that:

- Are spam or advertising
- Are clearly off-topic or disruptive
- Advocate illegal activity
- Promote particular services, products, or political organizations
- Infringe on copyright or trademarks
- Violate any Trillium Lakelands DSB policies or procedures

Individuals who do not follow the guidelines below will have their posts removed and/or be blocked from this page.

You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information provided

Finally, the comments and posts expressed by others on the Trillium Lakelands DSB Facebook page do not reflect the opinions and/or position of the Trillium Lakelands DSB or its employees.

For more information about Trillium Lakelands DSB and to contact us please visit our website at [tldsb.ca](http://tldsb.ca)

## **Social Media Guidelines for Staff**

TLDSB recognizes that electronic communication may be a useful tool for teacher/student communication about educational matters. In order to assure that all electronic communications between teachers and students are consistent with the goals and policies of the district, TLDSB employees may communicate with students on educational matters and only through TLDSB electronic accounts and applications such as email accounts, and classroom websites. Any TLDSB employee who wishes to utilize any technology for electronic communication other than those listed above to communicate with students should contact the school principal and obtain approval from the Technology Services Superintendent before utilizing the technology.

TLDSB recognizes that some employees may maintain personal blogs or websites, and/or contribute posts to personal blogs or personal websites or web pages of others and/or participate in social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, a LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram. TLDSB encourages the use of social media. When used properly, it is an excellent tool for professional development and two-way communication. Additionally, employees who participate in social media must abide at all times with all legal requirements including compliance with all privacy and information laws. Employees must follow the following guidelines:

1. If you have a presence on social media, use the highest level of privacy tools available to control access to your personal activity. However, even with these privacy settings, remember that someone could hack those tools and make your private posts public. In addition, social media sites can change their privacy policies and standards at any time, putting posts that you thought were private in the public domain.
2. Do not disclose student record information on personal social media sites including student work, photographs of students, or any other personally identifiable information about students.
3. Do not make or post disparaging, discriminatory, defamatory, confidential, threatening, libellous, obscene or slanderous comments about Trillium Lakelands District School Board, its employees, students, or school community members.

4. Do not post copyrighted information.
5. Do not use TLDSB or school logos or email addresses on personal social media sites.
6. Ensure that your profile and related content (even if it is of a personal and not an official nature) is consistent with how you wish to present yourself as a professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with your position. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks.
  - a. Do not use racial slurs, profanity, personal insults, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in your work place.
  - b. Do not endorse any commercial products, services or entities related to your work at TLDSB. For example, if you are a custodian, don't endorse cleaning products; if you are a teacher don't endorse learning programs.
  - c. Do not post inappropriate photos or information of yourself online.
  - d. Do not choose an inappropriate avatar.
  - e. Do not link to inappropriate content.
7. TLDSB employees must include disclaimers on their personal blogs that their views are their own and don't reflect the position of Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Even when you think you are talking as an individual, people may perceive you to be talking on behalf of TLDSB.

## **Communication with Students**

1. Employees have the responsibility of maintaining an appropriate employee-student relationship at all times.
2. No internet-based communication shall occur between employees and students on a non TLDSB sponsored system. Employees may communicate with students about school-related matters via TLDSB email and other TLDSB programs. Employees may not communicate privately with students via social media websites, or private email. Employees may not text message students without prior permission from supervisor.
3. If a student contacts an employee, the employee should not respond online. The employee could speak to the student the next school day and suggest other methods of communication – such as an email to the employee's work address.
4. If a student continues to contact the employee, the employee must share the information with the school or building administrator or supervisor.
5. Do not become "friends" with or "fans" of your students or their parents online.

## **Social Media Content Guidelines for Schools**

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram are additional communication tools for schools. These tools do not replace emails to parents, phone calls, website posts, etc. The same message that you post on social media can also be shared through traditional channels.

Commit to posting to school or department social media accounts on a regular basis. As you get started, set up a reminder once a week (or more often) to put something on these sites. Keep in mind MPIFPA laws apply to social media content and therefore, content must comply with these laws.

## **What to Post**

- Share breaking news, including inclement weather days, late buses, etc.
- Reinforce messages already posted on your web site, in your newsletter, etc.
- Promote awards and achievements.
- Post student essays, photos, artwork, etc. Check for photo permission. You may also send a letter to parents/guardians asking for permission to post a specific item.
- Post events and remind people when the date, time or location changes. Use social media to boost attendance at events, such as student-led conferences and curriculum night.
- Link to positive media coverage.
- Answer questions and clarify misconceptions.
- Promote a school goal, such as fewer late- arrivals, more at-home reading.
- Be interactive. Some businesses are having a lot of success asking for feedback to fun questions. Remember, Facebook is for ages 13 and older, so don't ask questions of students.

## **What Not to Post**

- Do not disclose student record information including student work, photographs of students or any other personally identifiable information about students.
- Do not make or post disparaging, discriminatory, defamatory, confidential, threatening, libellous, obscene, or slanderous comments.
- Do not post copyrighted information.
- Do not endorse any commercial products, services or entities.

## **When Others Post Content**

Most social media accounts allow the administrator to delete responses or content posted by others, but should you?

If any content posted is in violation of any TLDSB policy or any applicable law, including, but not limited to profane language, sexual content, solicitations of commerce and illegal activity, then the content will be removed.

We endeavour to not remove someone's comment simply because they disagree with something occurring at a school or the district.

Social media allows your school to have a two-way conversation. Sometimes a response from the school or school board serves a better purpose than simply deleting the comment.

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