

<p>Support Services 5103</p> <p>Online Communication and Social Media Use</p>	Administrative Application	
	Last Reviewed /Approved on:	August 14, 2024
	References:	The Education Act, 1995, Sec. 175 (1)(a) The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Administrative Applications 5400 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (LAFOIP) 7201 Employee Code of Conduct Policy 12 – Role of the Director
	Status:	Operational

Preamble:

In an evolving and dynamic digital landscape, communication and interaction through technology has become an essential element to education in Regina Catholic School Division (RCSD). In their various forms, **social media** and digital learning tools offer powerful ways to disseminate information, engage stakeholders, foster collaboration, and enhance teaching and learning experiences. They also require responsible use to mitigate potential harm, uphold professionalism, and ensure adherence to terms of service.

RCSD leverages **digital learning tools** for educational purposes in a variety of **contexts**. Most tools are closed, requiring user authentication and password protection. Depending on the goal/purpose, some tools may facilitate interaction among classmates, while other tools may be open to extend learning beyond the classroom. Each platform comes with guidelines for appropriate use, underscoring the significance of upholding professionalism, confidentiality, safety, and privacy. It is a requirement that staff monitor student use of any digital platform.

Definitions:

1. **Social Media:** Online platforms where users share and exchange information, connect with others, and interact through features such as posting updates, sharing content, and messaging.
2. **Digital Learning Tools/Platforms:** Online tools/platforms used by staff and students for educational purposes such as sharing learning, information, or content and providing safe spaces for collaboration. Access and audience vary based on the intended context of use:
 - **Teacher-Directed One-Way Communication:** Teachers share information or messages with authorized users (students and/or parents/guardians) who can only view the content without the ability to respond or contribute. (i.e. class feeds, broadcast messages, email, etc.).
 - **Confidential Communication and Interaction:** Communication and collaboration between a teacher, their student, and/or parent/guardian. (i.e. student grades/proficiency levels, portfolios, etc.).

- **Classroom Communication and Interaction:** Facilitation of active student participation, contribution, and collaboration among classmates, with the teacher moderating interactions and content. (i.e. digital classrooms).
- **External Communication and Interaction:** Supervised use of platforms where students can interact with approved individuals outside the classroom for educational purposes under teacher supervision. (i.e. websites, blogs, etc.).

Guidelines for Online Communication and Social Media Use

Online communication and social media use within RCSD are permitted for educational, professional, and business purposes according to the following guidelines:

1. Staff may create posts, respond, and upload information related to the educational goals and business and parent/guardian communication needs of RCSD.
2. Staff shall not use online communication for personal opinions or comments when representing RCSD.
3. All staff and students need to maintain RCSD expectations for professional conduct when posting, replying, or conducting any online interaction. Staff and students are encouraged to maintain an appropriate social media and online presence.
4. Online interaction conducted during work hours must serve educational or business purposes for the school division."
5. Any misuse or prohibited use of online communication or social media may result in disciplinary action that may include but is not limited to, revoking or restriction of network privileges. Employee and student access to RCSD network or RCSD hardware/software may be revoked because of inappropriate use.
6. As per Administrative Application 7201 Employee Code of Conduct, online interaction determined to be inappropriate will be dealt with in the same manner as inappropriate face-to-face interactions and may result in disciplinary action.
7. Student, staff or parent/guardian information is personal and private and must remain confidential. This information should not be shared in any manner unless permission has been granted as per Administrative Application 5400 - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (LAFOIP).
8. Staff shall ensure that all parent/guardian notifications, consents, and terms of use are in place and followed when social media and digital learning platforms are used.
9. Staff and students shall be aware that their personal online communication and comments, if connected to school division operation and practices, are subject to review at any time.

School and Classroom Usage

1. RCSD permits the use of social media and digital learning platforms for online communication and interaction.
2. Teachers and students may use digital learning platforms provided parents/guardians are informed, the proper consents are in place, and the terms of use are followed
3. At school, students using digital learning platforms must do so under the supervision of a school division staff member.
4. Questions regarding the use of a particular digital learning platform must be directed to the teacher and school administration.