Horizon School Division
COMMUNICATION: SOCIAL MEDIA, WEB BASED, DIVISION OWNED DEVICES ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

Objective:
Horizon School Division supports learning environments that contain cloud based communication and collaboration technology that supports pedagogy and engages and empowers all students and breaks down barriers to inclusive learning. The division also recognizes the statutory and ethical responsibility for staff and students to adhere to citizenship in a digital age guidelines and procedures.

Definitions:
Web Based – can be thought of as what people are doing while online rather than a technology or cloud based application. Web Based Communication is often synonymous with **Social Media** which are the online tools and technology that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives with each other. In both cases the intent is to:
- makes the web faster (e.g. AJAX – asynchronous updates),
- enhances accessibility (e.g. RSS – "really simple syndication"),
- simplifies publishing (e.g. blogging), and
- connect and collaborate with friends and colleagues (e.g. social networks).

In many cases, information is stored remotely in cloud based applications and cloud based data storage facilities and shared within and beyond schools' physical boundaries.

- **Cloud-based applications** are applications hosted outside of Horizon's internal network facilities. Examples include productivity applications to produce and/or store documents, videos, or other forms of expression, but also include "social" applications that facilitate the sharing of information, photos, videos, opinions, and discussion.
- **Cloud-based data storage facilities** are data storage services that provide data storage on servers that are outside the Horizon's internal network facilities.
  - Cloud based applications and cloud based data storage facilities typically require an account before being able to access them or before information can be stored.
  - Some cloud based applications allow you to choose your preferred level of security (e.g. public access, private, or by invitation only).

Background Information:
Advantages
- Meaningful collaboration between students
- Meaningful collaboration between divisional staff
- Opportunity to extend learning to project-based approaches
- Tools are easy to use and work with (user friendly)
- Higher level of student engagement
- Availability of multitude of creation-based tools
- Integration of multi-sensory, multiple intelligence learning and extends scope of differentiated instruction (providing variety of learning choices)
- No cost or minimal cost for software
- Web-based storage- frees space on internal servers and hard drives
- Many web based tools allow you to save back-ups of your work

- Allows anytime access for anytime learning
- Prepares students for the digital world in which they are in
- Potential for further, purposeful and effective integration and uses of technology in core subject areas
- Opportunity to address and continually reinforce Citizenship in a digital age

Disadvantages
- Email accounts are needed for registering for most web based tools
- Potential loss of information if site is no longer in service or no longer is appropriate
- Potential lack of supervision if students are using tools at home
- If standards are not in place and Citizenship in a digital age is not continually reinforced, students may give personal information that is not appropriate
- Cannot be monitored 24/7
- Once posted online, control and management is lost
- Some tools have age restrictions (typically 13) so teachers need to read the user agreements.

Teacher preparation prior to using web based Communication with students:
- Deep understanding of Citizenship in a digital age- how to model and teach good Citizenship in a digital age to students on a continual basis rather than a "one time shot"
- Clear learning outcomes are matched with the activity, and the particular tool is used by the teacher before allowing student access
- Clear classroom guidelines and expectations while using tools with pre-determined consequences beforehand
- Horizon sponsored email accounts will simplify the process and would allow for easier access to usernames and passwords, as web based tools require an email account.
- Read the terms of use agreement on each site- paying special attention to age requirements and other restrictions.
- Parental consent as per FOIP will be needed for students' photos and work posted on websites.
- Make sure that you know how to use the tool efficiently before you open it up to your students.
- Teacher-directed use of cloud-based applications or cloud-based storage by students must be preceded by:
    - Instruction on the terms of use under which the application is being provided by the source,
    - instruction in citizenship in a digital age,
    - communication with parent(s) and/or guardians regarding the instructional value of student use of cloud-based applications and/or storage,
        - Note this consent does not need to be on an application-by-application basis
- Use of cloud-based applications must adhere to age-restrictions,
- Use of cloud-based applications or cloud-based storage by staff must respect the principles of "Citizenship in a digital age". In addition, staff are expected to respect the following while on-line:

- o the same principles of conduct that would be expected while off-line,
- o for all staff, ensure that if you identify yourself as a Horizon employee, that you also clearly articulate that you are not speaking on behalf of Horizon School Division, but are instead expressing a personal view or opinion (unless you are explicitly empowered to speak on behalf of Horizon),
- o for all staff, understand that your actions both on and off line away from work can affect your employment relationship with Horizon.

Student Preparation and expectations for the use of web based learning tools:
- Teachers should read the user agreements for each web based site (and model this process with students)
- Internet safety and classroom guidelines must be established and agreed upon with consequences given beforehand for non-compliance.
- Define web based tools (See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0)
- When creating usernames for their web based tool (during initial sign up of tool) students should use on online screen name such as blueman67 or billybob that is unique to themselves, and does not give away their identity to external parties.
- Web based tools will be signed up for using student email accounts. **At no time are students to use their first name or last name when signing up for third party email or web based accounts other than when providing their Horizon email address.** Account user names should not be identifiable outside of the learning environment.
- Students should create a complex password (not a dictionary word) containing a capital letter, lower case letter, a symbol, and/or number somewhere in their password. ***Keep a record of their passwords in a secure area in case they forget, or you want to access their accounts**.
- Keep a record of your student's user-names for the year. If you are using multiple web based tools it might be useful to have students use one pseudonym for the entire year.
- Students use the tools allocated to them through classroom instruction which meet the curricular fit.
- When/if they are instructed to enter an address they enter the address of the school or division office 6302 56 St. Taber AB T1G 1Z9. only, and should not enter their own.
- It is strongly encouraged that all web based tools, have parental consent, and without reference to the "student" or their names.
- Student will not refer to another person in online text inside/outside of the class using that another student's last name. Nor will they give out personal information about themselves or others.
- When signing up for web tools, students will use the following birthdate: 01-01-1967 instead of having use their own.
- Some web based tools require you to confirm email address. In those situations the students would be able to go into their own email accounts and confirm their own web tool enrolment.

Notes:
- Students should be encouraged to create an on-line persona or alias. This is not to be confused with taking on someone else's identity or trying to be someone else. Rather it is teaching them that it is smart to create an online name for themselves to keep their identity safe, similar to a pen name. Students must be taught the difference between an alias for themselves and pretending to be someone else to encourage ethical and responsible Citizenship in a digital age.
- There may be circumstances when student pictures or student identities may enhance the learning project, or give a higher sense of ownership. In these situations it is important to get individual consent for each public activity, just as we do now for media such as newspapers.
- While cloud based accounts are not considered owned by Horizon School Division, access by supervisors will only occur with reasonable cause.
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Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of communication, technology-related or not, is vital to maintaining the public trust and appropriate professional relationships with students, parents, and other stakeholders. Employees must be aware of the numerous challenges and the ramifications associated with the use of electronic communication and social media.

This guideline supports the *Teaching Quality Standards for the Teaching Profession* and encompasses all staff within Horizon. Staff express their commitment to students' well-being and learning through positive professional influence, professional judgment and empathy in practice. Honesty, reliability and moral action are embodied in the ethical standard of integrity.

Electronic communication and social media can be effective when used cautiously and professionally. They serve a range of purposes, from helping students and parents/guardians access assignments and resources related to classroom studies to connecting with classrooms in other communities and countries.

Employees also use the Internet and social networking sites as instructional tools and for professional development, seeking information on lesson plans, new developments and methodologies. However, the most popular social media applications were not created specifically for educational purposes and their use can expose employees to risk when it comes to maintaining professionalism. It is up to employees to know and respect proper professional boundaries with students, even when students initiate electronic interaction.

PRIVATE VS. PROFESSIONAL
There is a distinction between the professional and private life of a teacher and the work and private life of all staff. Horizon staff are individuals with private lives, however, off-duty conduct matters. Sound judgment and due care should be exercised. Teaching is a public profession. Canada's Supreme Court ruled that teachers' off-duty conduct, even when not directly related to students, is relevant to their suitability to teach. Employees should maintain a sense of professionalism at all times – in their personal and professional lives.

PROFESSIONAL VULNERABILITY

Employees can be vulnerable to unintended misuses of electronic communication. Social media encourage casual dialogue. Even the most innocent actions can be easily misconstrued or manipulated. The immediacy and simplicity of a text message, for example, may lead to longer, informal conversations. Rules may relax and informal salutations may replace time-respected forms of professional address.

Electronic messages are not anonymous. They can be tracked, misdirected, manipulated and live forever on the Internet. Social media sites create and archive copies of every piece of content posted, even when deleted from online profiles. Once information is digitized, the author relinquishes all control.

The use of the Internet and social media, despite best intentions, may cause employees to forget their professional responsibilities and the unique position of trust and authority given to them by society. Employees should never share information with students in any environment that they would not willingly and appropriately share in a school or school-related setting or in the community. Online identities and actions are visible to the public and can result in serious repercussions or embarrassment.

MINIMIZING THE RISKS: ADVICE TO EMPLOYEES
INTERACT APPROPRIATELY

- Model the behaviour you expect to see online from your students.
- Alert students to appropriate online behaviour and the proper use of comments and images.
- Maintain your professional persona by communicating with students electronically at appropriate times of the day and through established education platforms (for example, a web page dedicated to a school program, project or class rather than a personal profile).
- Maintain a formal, courteous and professional tone in all communications to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained.
- Avoid exchanging private texts, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photos of a personal nature with students.
- When utilizing social media, reflect upon whether one should decline student-initiated "friend" requests and issuing "friend" requests to students for non-school related social media.
- Notify parents/guardians before using social networks for classroom activities. Let them know about the platforms you use in your class to connect with students and consider giving them access to group pages.

UNDERSTAND PRIVACY CONCERNS

- Operate in all circumstances online as a professional – as you would in the community.
- Manage the privacy and security settings of your social media accounts. Privacy settings can shift and change without notice. Check the settings frequently.
- Assume that information you post can be accessed or altered.
- Ensure that the privacy settings for content and photos are set appropriately and monitor who is able to post to any of your social media locations. Remember, no privacy mechanism is guaranteed.

- Monitor regularly all content you or others post to your social media accounts and remove anything that is inappropriate.
- Consider asking others not to tag you on any photographs without your permission.
- Ask others to remove any undesirable content related to you.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY
- Consider whether any posting may reflect poorly on you, your school or the jurisdiction, or the teaching profession.
- Be transparent and authentic. Use your true professional identity at all times. Even if you create a false identity, courts can compel disclosure of your true identity.
- Avoid online criticism about students, colleagues, your employer or others within the school community.
- Avoid impulsive, inappropriate or heated comments.
- Ensure that your comments do not incite others to make discriminatory or other professionally unacceptable comments.
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of student information.
- Be aware of your employer's applicable policies and programs regarding the use of social media/e-communications and the appropriate use of electronic equipment. Even if your employer has no applicable policy, it is your responsibility to exercise good judgment.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF
- When interacting electronically am I using electronic communication and social media to enhance their learning or to satisfy a personal need?
- What are my reasons for sharing this information – are they professional or are they personal?
- Is this picture or comment something I would be comfortable with my students, their parents/guardians, my supervisor, my family or the media seeing?
- Would my peers or supervisors consider what I have posted as reasonable and professional?
- Would I communicate this way in my community?
- Are the photos, videos or audio recordings I am posting susceptible to misrepresentation or manipulation?
- Am I keeping current in my awareness and knowledge of social media technology developments to protect myself from misuse?

Employees should be able to answer this: How does my online presence – that which I control and that which is posted by others – reflect my professionalism, and how does it reflect on the teaching profession?

Maintaining professional boundaries in all forms of communication, technology-related or not, is vital to maintaining, respect, the public trust and appropriate professional relationships.

GUIDELINES ON CELLULAR PHONE/DEVICE ACQUISITION AND USE

Horizon School Division –Division Office Funded Cellular Phones

<u>Purpose and Scope</u>
The purpose of this guideline is to:
- provide guidance to Horizon School Division employees regarding the proper procurement, use and possession of cellular devices for voice and data communication;
- ensure that the use of cellular technology is correctly authorized and appropriate; and
- ensure that the Horizon School Division is correctly reimbursed for excessive personal use of cellular devices.

Cellular devices are provided to improve service and to enhance business efficiencies. They are an effective resource and enable communication in areas or situations where conventional landline phones are not available or are impractical. They are not a personal benefit and shall not be a primary mode of communication unless they are the most efficient and cost effective means to conduct business.

Cellular phones and services may be provided to certain employees for three principal reasons:

1. The employee performs the majority of his/her job activities "in the field," where business either cannot be conducted on a landline telephone or where it would be inefficient to use a landline telephone. Examples include staff whose daily assignments take them to various sites both throughout the jurisdiction and beyond.
2. The employee's responsibilities require that he or she be immediately accessible in case of emergency.
3. The employee's responsibilities periodically require travel or emergency contact availability.

<u>Procurement</u>
All cellular devices and services, funded from Jurisdiction resources, must be justified on the basis of work assignments and must be approved by the employee's supervisor. No employee may approve his/her own cellular service plan.

All new and renewing service contracts must be done through the transportation administrative assistant

The equipment chosen shall be the most cost efficient option that will provide the required level of service.

The lowest-cost service plan available to accommodate the particular business need of the employee shall be utilized. From time to time, the jurisdiction (with assistance from the service provider) may review individual usage and modify cellular plans to review and ensure cost efficiency and employee compliance with division guidelines.

Procurement of replacement phones may only be done with approval from the employee's supervisor and must be processed through the transportation administrative assistant.

Use of Cellular Devices

The Horizon School Division provides cellular devices to employees for the purpose of conducting jurisdiction business. Employees should realize that, although personal calls made within the local calling region and under the usage limits provided by the employee's plan do not result in additional charges, they do count toward the overall air time usage limits established under the service agreement and should therefore be kept to a minimum.

Long distance personal calls should be avoided if at all possible or redirected to the users' home phone account using a personal calling card.

Employees are asked to reimburse the division for long distance or overage charges deemed unnecessary by the employee's supervisor.

Safe Keeping

Each employee shall be responsible for the safe keeping, care, and custody of the cellular device assigned to him or her.

Cellular phones, telephone numbers and accessories (including chargers, batteries, hands-free devices, cases, and manuals) shall remain the property of Horizon School Division and shall be relinquished by the employee upon termination of their employment, reassignment to another position, or at the request of the employee's supervisor.

Supervisors shall notify the transportation administrative assistant who shall ensure the service is cancelled or transferred to an approved employee.

Management of Use

Supervisors who become aware of a violation of the letter or spirit of this guideline shall take such remedial action as may be appropriate to control any such violation.