

## **607.4 Responsible Use of Technology: Use of Social Media**

### **Background**

A social media administrative procedure is a corporate code of conduct that provides guidance to representatives of Lethbridge School Division who engage in social media activities for either personal or professional reasons.

Through the use of social media accounts, the Division wishes to provide a variety of communication tools to engage with its stakeholders and thus align with its priority of improving internal and external communications. Social media is defined as the various online and electronic tools enabling people to communicate and share information via the internet. While there are other reasons to use social media, including professional development, the main purpose for the use of social media from a systems perspective is for reasons of communication.

There is an inherent risk in the participation in all social media activities as actions are publicly viewed on a world wide scale via the internet. Individuals are cautioned that there is no expectation of privacy in regards to participation in social media accounts.

Access to all Division and school social media accounts are to be consistent with any acceptable use or network use agreements that the Division executes with its staff members, trustees and students, and this procedure is applicable regardless of whether social media activity occurs outside of regular school or work hours.

This administrative procedure strictly prohibits the violation of any laws, policies of the Board or professional obligations of any participants in the Division or individual Lethbridge School Division school social media accounts. Consequences of any breach of the procedure will vary with respect to students, volunteers, staff and trustees and any breach of copyright laws, FOIP Act, Board policies regarding network use, reference to Codes of Conduct and professional obligations such as the ATA Code of Conduct could be, but are not limited to: a loss of access privileges, loss of volunteer position, student discipline measures, employee disciplinary action including employment suspension or termination or any complaints to any professional bodies, or legal action, including criminal prosecution.

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**Procedures**

1. Social media is intended to complement Lethbridge School Division and school websites. Whenever possible, accepted linking practices should be used that can update social media sites when sections of the school's website are updated.
2. Recommended updates for social media accounts include but are not limited to school news, sporting event results, calendars of events, photos from school and extra-curricular events, items of educational or social interest, links to newspaper stories, and good news or celebrations in regards to the school, students, staff or Division.
3. Division approved school-based social media accounts shall be administered and monitored through a social media management system by the Communications Officer and school leader or designate.
  - 3.1. All schools shall provide login information and passwords associated with all social media pages and sites to the Communications Officer, as well as the names of staff who have access to this information. With respect to Facebook, rather than provide usernames and passwords, the Communications Officer shall be invited as a friend and accepted as a site administrator.
  - 3.2. The Communications Officer may request administrative status on any school-based social media account.
  - 3.3. All Lethbridge School Division staff are responsible for representing Lethbridge School Division in a positive light.
  - 3.4. Strong passwords shall be used. Account administrators are required to log off when editing of the account is completed or shall ensure devices will lock in a reasonable time to ensure security of the device and the integrity of the social media site and network.
4. All postings, including photos, are subject to applicable provincial legislation and Lethbridge School Division FOIP policies and procedures at all times.
  - 4.1. Any names or pictures that are used need to have proper permissions granted prior to publication on any social media site.
  - 4.2. Users of social media will comply with all copyright laws.
  - 4.3. Social media accounts should be updated regularly to keep the site engaging.
  - 4.4. Accounts may be created to promote and/or advertise daily activities or events as school administration sees fit.

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5. Account administrators and the Communications Officer or designate reserve the right to delete or remove any posting, photo, comment or mention that violates the policies of Lethbridge School Division or is degrading, discriminatory, defamatory or offensive in any manner or brings the reputation of anyone, the school or the Division into disrepute.
  - 5.1. All social media accounts must be monitored by the school account administrators on a regular basis to ensure appropriateness of comments.
  - 5.2. Reasons for removal of a post or discussion may be done at the Communication Officer's or School Leader's discretion with an acknowledgment noted of why the retraction was necessary.
  - 5.3. The Communications Officer will monitor social media sites when alerted of a potential issue.
6. Comments or confidential information are not to be posted on Division approved accounts on anything related to legal matters, subjects deemed controversial, Division policy/procedures, contractual matters or a crisis situation. If in doubt about information to be posted, users are to err on the side of caution by not posting and checking with the District's FOIP Coordinator.
7. Division approved social media accounts shall include the following disclaimers on their sites for purposes of transparency and accountability to our stakeholders:  
*Ensure that posts are respectful to our Lethbridge School Division community and are consistent with our policies and procedures. Individuals who do not follow the guidelines below will have their posts removed and/or be blocked from the sites:*
  - *Obscene, racial or disrespectful comments, posts and visuals will not be allowed.*
  - *Comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization will not be permitted.*
  - *Users participate at own risk, taking personal responsibility for comments, username and any information provided.*
  - *Message the account or school administrator regarding personnel issues rather than using social media.*

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*Lethbridge School Division also reserves 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 copyrights or trademarks; and violate Lethbridge School Division Board policies and/or procedures. The comments and posts expressed on our social media accounts do not necessarily reflect the opinions and/or position of the Lethbridge School Division School Board.*

8. Staff members who are responsible for the administration of social media accounts on behalf of a Lethbridge School Division school or Division account will endeavour to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner.
  - 8.1. Responses to questions posted online may be provided directly to the  
  
individual who made the query rather than online if deemed more appropriate and if possible.
  - 8.2. Misleading or inaccurate information about the Division will be acknowledged and corrected where required.
  - 8.3. Provide a link on the social media site, if possible, to this administrative procedure.
9. Parent use of social media  
It is recognized that Lethbridge School Division does not have any jurisdiction over parents' personal use of social media. It should be communicated to parents, however, that defamatory statements regarding Lethbridge School Division staff members or students within the context of school-related events or instruction, will be defined as harassment. Sanctions may include those delineated in the Division Procedure 402.8.1 Harassment and Discrimination: a written warning, issue of trespassing notice, termination of volunteerism, and/or referral to appropriate authorities such as law enforcement.