

APPROPRIATE USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING

POLICY

CODE: J 3.7

Our goal as a Roman Catholic school system is to support the healthy development of children and youth in a caring, Christ-centred learning environment. The London District Catholic School Board is committed to provide meaningful programming so that all students can achieve high standards in critical thinking and collaborative learning to develop effective communication skills. The integration of information technologies is an imperative factor to support equity of outcomes for students and to engage their cognitive development for 21st Century Learning.

The London District Catholic School Board is committed to ensure safe, productive, and engaging learning environments in our school communities. In keeping with its Mission, the London District Catholic School Board affirms its belief in the dignity and sacredness of the human person and its responsibility to foster an environment and attitude that is conducive to the academic, spiritual and social development of all students. The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations call all graduates to be discerning believers who are reflective, collaborative and responsible citizens to communicate information clearly and honestly with sensitivity to others.

Existing and emerging digital technologies present new opportunities and challenges for Catholic school communities. The Board, therefore, delegates to the Director the responsibility for establishing and implementing regulations and procedures for the appropriate use of personal electronic devices and online social networking that follow these guidelines.

1. All persons will use personal electronic devices (PEDs) in a courteous, appropriate, respectful and ethical manner in accordance with our Catholic faith.
2. Students will only use personal electronic devices for appropriate learning purposes under the supervision of the Principal and classroom teacher.
3. Students, employees and visitors will use personal electronic devices in accordance with all policies and procedures of the London District Catholic School Board.

Adopted: April 14, 2008

Revised: September 13, 2011

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SCOPE:

“The essence of the Internet in fact is that it provides an almost unending flood of information much of which passes in a moment. In a culture, which feeds on the ephemeral, there can easily be a risk of believing that it is facts that matter, rather than values. The Internet offers extensive knowledge, but it does not teach values and when values are disregarded, our very humanity is demeaned and man easily loses sight of his transcendent dignity. Despite its enormous potential for good, some of the degrading and damaging ways in which the Internet can be used are already obvious to all and public authorities surely have a responsibility to guarantee that this marvelous instrument serves the common good and does not become a source of harm.”

Pope John Paul II. “Internet: a New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel.” A message from the Holy Father for the 36th World Communications Day, January 24, 2002.

Our Catholic Faith teaches us that the human person realizes one’s dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it: if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.”

(1 Corinthians 12:26)

This recurring theme of community and the common good calls us to respect each other and to work for the good of others. Vatican II states, “When he/she consciously takes part in the life of social groups, he/she carries out the design of God.”

(Gaudium et Spes no. 57)

We celebrate modern technology and realize its power when used effectively and appropriately for the good of all. As responsible people, we also realize and understand that unfettered use of this ever-changing technology has the capacity for possible misuse and abuse and far too great a potential for assailing the dignity, self-worth, esteem and sanctity of the person. The power and nature of emerging technologies supports the paramount importance to have a Board-wide policy calling on all in our community to be discerning, respectful and responsible users of technology in our schools.

In the spirit of creating a positive Catholic climate for all our school communities, with the aim of improving student achievement, increasing school safety and protecting the dignity and privacy of the individual, the London District Catholic School Board asserts that Principals, in fulfillment of their legislative responsibilities under the Education Act, will regulate the use of personal electronic devices (PEDs) during the school day.

The London District Catholic School Board understands that the promotion of academic excellence, the dignity of the human person and the preservation of academic integrity are supported by the regulated use of PEDs during the instructional day.

APPROPRIATE USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING

REGULATIONS (continued)

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1.0 Definitions

1.1 PEDs are portable electronic handheld equipment that can be used for the purposes of learning, communication, data management, word processing, wireless Internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and entertainment.

1.2 They include, but are not limited to, existing and emerging mobile communication systems:

Smart technologies (e.g. cell phones, smart phones, etc.).

Portable Internet devices (e.g. I-Pod®, I-Pad®, BlackBerry®, Android systems).

Handheld entertainment systems (e.g. gaming systems, audio/video players).

Recording devices - Digital or analogue audio and/or video captures.

Covert audio or video devices.

Laptop computers, tablets, notebooks, netbooks, etc.

Any other convergent communication technologies

1.3 PEDs also include any current or emerging handheld technologies or portable IT systems.

1.4 The London District Catholic School Board requires all schools to publish the following statement on web portals, student/parent handbooks, agenda and codes of conduct:

The use of portable electronic devices (PED) is permitted on school premises under limited conditions as authorized by the Principal for the sole purpose of enhancing academic achievement while respecting the dignity and safety of all members of our school community.

2.0 Expected Use of PEDs by Students and Employees

The principles of Catholic values, as outlined in the Safe Schools Policy A 3.3, serve as the foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating safe schools policies, directives, and programs. Every member of a school community is sacred and made in the image and likeness of God. Dignity is maintained regardless of the circumstances and the challenges members of a school community may manifest. Each individual is entitled to acceptance, respect, and opportunities to develop his or her self-worth. Adherence to Catholic tenets promotes the values of respect, dignity, equality, forgiveness, and compassion.

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REGULATIONS (continued)

CODE: J 3.7-R

Prohibited uses of PEDs by students and employees shall result in disciplinary actions up to and including confiscation, suspension, expulsion, and/or the involvement of police services. In addition, the London District Catholic School Board establishes the following regulations to prohibit the inappropriate use of PEDs:

- 2.1 Use in any way that compromises the academic integrity of student learning, assessment and/or evaluation. PEDs shall only be used in learning environments under the direction of the Principal and classroom teacher.
- 2.2 Use in any way that interferes with or disrupts the instructional day or the teaching / learning environment. The Principal and classroom teacher shall ensure that PEDs are used only for instructional purposes and use all authority to support the integrity of student learning.
- 2.3 Use in any way that violates an individual's reasonable expectation of dignity and privacy.
- 2.4 Use in any way that compromises personal and/or school safety (i.e. bullying or harassment, etc.).
- 2.5 Use in any way that facilitates the commission of a crime.
- 2.6 Any other use of PEDs that compromises an individual's reputation, character or interferes with school security, personal safety, individual dignity, privacy or academic integrity.

In all cases, the sole discretion of the Principal to support the proper use of PEDs shall be final and rooted in our Catholic faith, the policies of the London District Catholic School and the Ontario Education Act.

3.0 Security of Personal Electronic Devices

- 3.1 The London District Catholic School Board and schools assume no responsibility for the theft, loss, repair or replacement of personal electronic devices that are brought onto school property, whether the PED is lost, stolen, damaged or confiscated.

4.0 Expectations of Online Social Networking

The principles of Catholic values, as outlined in the Safe Schools Implementation in Catholic Schools, serve as the foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating safe schools policies, directives, and programs. Every member of a school community is

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REGULATIONS (continued)

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sacred and made in the image and likeness of God. Dignity is maintained regardless of the circumstances and the challenges members of a school community may manifest. Each individual is entitled to acceptance, respect, and opportunities to develop his or her self-worth. Adherence to this principle promotes the values of respect, dignity, tolerance, equality, forgiveness, and compassion.

Online social networking includes but is not limited to, existing and emerging networking sites, including Facebook, MSN, Twitter, Formspring, Tumblr, BlackBerry® Messenger, Google+, etc.

- 4.1 Online social networking and the increasing use of Internet sites which contain personal information also increases the opportunity for unwelcome and unsolicited written material, pictures or videos. Harassment in any form, including comments posted electronically, is unacceptable.
- 4.2 All inappropriate references to Board or school personnel, students and/or any member of the school community in computer-related mediums such as web pages or e-mail which is deemed to be conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school are violations of this policy.
- 4.3 Using computer technology to communicate inappropriate, demeaning, harassing or threatening messages shall be subject to disciplinary action. The Provincial Code of Conduct extends the right to discipline to include actions taken off school property and outside school activities where the activity has an impact on the school climate. In addition, the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act - 2009 provides clear direction to support the safety and well being of students. Police may be contacted, along with other community agencies and the actions could result in suspension, expulsion, and/or criminal charges.
- 4.4 Using any technology to circumvent the security, safety and legislative protocols of the board and the Ministry of Education is a violation of this policy.

All social networking must be supervised by the Principal and classroom teacher and be used for the sole purpose of supporting the collaborative learning of students.