

SCHOOLS

H-WCDSB POLICY MANUAL

INTERNET – ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR SCHOOLS

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POLICY

1. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board (Board) provides **students and staff** access to the **HCDSB** digital network that also includes access to the Internet. This service enables students and staff access to electronic mail (e-mail), numerous electronic databases and other social networking tools that facilitate and promote collaboration for educational purposes. In addition it provides users with access to an ever-expanding array of digital content and provides the possibility of communication with others in the school, in the local community and around the globe.
2. All use of the **HCDSB** network and the Internet shall support the goals of Catholic education and be consistent with the Mission and Vision of both the Board and the school. The network is intended to support and enhance student learning and achievement, be made available equitably to all students **and staff**, be a support for classroom learning activities, **and contribute to the efficient operation of the school.**
3. The Internet offers tremendous opportunities to meet the varied instructional needs, learning styles and abilities of students. It transforms the ways in which individuals share ideas, transmit information and interact with others. With these opportunities, however, arise new challenges and responsibilities. Since students will be able to access a wealth of information, it becomes necessary to teach them the critical thinking skills necessary to make good moral and intellectual decisions about the information they encounter and the information they share. Indeed, “schools and other educational institutions and programs for children and adults should provide training in discerning use of the Internet...including not just training in technical skills...but a capacity for informed, discerning evaluation of content.” (Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Internet*, n.7)
4. The Internet provides an opportunity to access unlimited amounts of information. It can make “an enormously valuable contribution to human life. It can foster prosperity and peace, intellectual and aesthetic growth, mutual understanding among peoples and nations on a global scale.” (Ibid, n.8). It also provides access to objectionable material such as pornography; hate literature and excessive commercial advertising. Such challenges need to be met within the context of the **HCDSB** Mission and Vision statement, the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations and with a very clearly stated understanding of “Acceptable-use” expectations and responsibilities.

RELATED POLICY

A.11 Internet and e-Mail Acceptable Use for Employees

A.12 Mobile Digital Devices

S.M.08 Safe Schools

DEFINITIONS

HWCD SB Network and e-mail systems: refers to all HWCD SB owned and operated systems including digital storage spaces, email clients (Microsoft Outlook and FirstClass) and all computer applications that connect to the HWCD SB computer network system and are made available to staff and students of the HWCD SB.

Users: all individuals given access to the HWCD SB network through a unique set of login/password credentials.

PROCEDURES

1. Board

The Board supports access by students to a wide range of **digital** resources and tools that support **teaching and learning**. Staff must develop appropriate skills to evaluate and integrate such resources into the regular instructional practices in the classroom. The Board therefore will:

- Provide network and Internet access equitably to all **staff and students**;
- **provide appropriate supervision through: staff oversight, logging of network activity, appropriate firewall controls over inappropriate content etc.;**
- provide access to e-mail and networked digital storage space;
- **provide access to secure wireless Internet for staff and students;**
- **log all HWCD SB network and e-mail accounts,** and
- train staff and students in the safe use of the computer network and provide resources to help staff guide students in appropriate use.

2. School Staff

In order to facilitate access and to ensure the appropriate use of the **HWCD SB network**, the school will:

- Ensure that **appropriate supervision is provided when students are accessing the HWCD SB network and the Internet;**

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- collect and maintain the properly completed *Acceptable Use Policy: Student Agreement Form* prior to student use of the **HWCD SB** network and Internet;
- monitor students for the appropriate use of the **HWCD SB** network as defined in this document;
- deal with student infractions of the Acceptable Use Policy in a manner consistent with the Safe Schools Policy;
- instruct users in the effective and ethical use of the Internet, social networking tools and other collaborative technologies and assist them in building the “capacity for informed, discerning evaluation of content” (Ibid, n.7), and
- ensure that any electronic information made available on the **HWCD SB** network is consistent with the Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act, other privacy legislation, and Board policy.

3. Students

Students are responsible for appropriate behaviour on the **HWCD SB** network just as they are in a classroom or a school. The **HWCD SB** network is provided as a tool that enhances and supports student learning and achievement.

A student in an Ontario Catholic school is expected to be: “an effective communicator who uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, and technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life” (Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations).

In order to ensure proper use of the **HWCD SB** network and the Internet students are required to:

- Use the **HWCD SB** network and the Internet only **with the login and password credentials provided by the Board**;
- Ensure that all activity undertaken on the **HWCD SB** network and the Internet is consistent with Catholic moral teaching. For example, students must ensure that they are not accessing material that is profane or obscene (pornography), material that advocates violence or intolerance towards others (hate material) etc. In the event of inadvertent access to such negative information students must immediately disclose such access to a staff member;
- When sending or publishing messages or other information on the network or other social networking sites “present information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others” (Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations);

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- Observe standards of academic honesty in never misrepresenting the work of another as an original work (plagiarism), acknowledge sources by using appropriate citation methods and obey all applicable copyright laws;
- Observe accepted standards of behaviour as “responsible citizens” (Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations) when accessing the **HCWDSB** network or the Internet

4. Acceptable Use: Terms and Conditions

a) Responsible Digital Citizenship

Ontario Catholic School Graduates are expected to be “responsible citizens who: act morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions, accept accountability for their own actions and contribute to the common good.” (Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations). This expectation holds true in all aspects of a student’s life including activity on the **HCWDSB** network and the Internet. Responsible citizenship as it pertains to Board networks and the Internet includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- Respect for self: Users of the **HCWDSB** network must remember that any actions they take or information they post on the Internet is visible to the public. Students must not post any inappropriate material or any material that **places their personal privacy at risk (e.g., address, phone number, etc.)**.
- Respect for others: Users of the **HCWDSB** network must ensure that they do not knowingly or intentionally post, display or send false or defamatory information about a person or organization.
- Politeness: No abusive messages and/or images are to be written, displayed or sent to others.
- Use of appropriate language: Swearing, using vulgarities or any other inappropriate language is unacceptable in all communications.
- Privacy: **Users of the HCWDSB network are responsible for ensuring the privacy of others. Pictures, names etc. should not be posted without the consent of the individual and/or their parents/guardians.**
- Respect and Stewardship for network resources: Users of the **HCWDSB** network must respect that system resources have limits and as a result must be shared equitably. The use of the **HCWDSB** network must not be conducted in a disruptive and/or selfish way (e.g., the downloading of large files that can negatively impact the performance of the Internet, sending

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- mass e-mail messages; annoying other users, inappropriate and extensive printing of material, etc.).
- Recognition of Private Ownership. All communications and information accessible via the **HWCD SB** network must be assumed to be private property and therefore subject to copyright restrictions.

b) Agreement Form

All HWCD SB students may access the Internet through the **HWCD SB** computer network under the terms **and conditions** defined in this policy and upon completion of the *Acceptable Use Policy: Student Agreement Form*.

Completed agreement forms are to be returned to the appropriate teacher and filed for future reference. Students under the age of 18 require the agreement form to be signed by a parent/guardian.

c) Inappropriate Use of Computers

The Board will deem what is inappropriate use based upon the guidelines outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy and its decision shall be final. The Board will take appropriate disciplinary measures to ensure that any inappropriate use of computers and the **HWCD SB** network and/or the Internet is dealt with firmly, fairly and expeditiously **and in a manner consistent with the Board's Safe Schools Policy (S.M.08)**.

d) Reliability

The Board makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. The Board will not be responsible for any damages suffered by a user. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, service interruptions, or user error or omission. Use of any information obtained via the **HWCD SB** networks is at the users' risk. The Board specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its network services.

e) Security

Security on the **HWCD SB** network is a high priority, especially since the system impacts so many users. **Any attempt to login to the system as another user and/or as a system administrator constitutes a serious breach of this policy.**

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A user who feels that he or she can identify a security problem on **the HWCDSB** network must **notify Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** staff immediately. It is important that all users know that the following actions are not acceptable:

- Sharing with or demonstrating to others a security problem;
- using another individual's network account;
- giving one's own or anyone else's security password/login information to another individual, and/or
- intentionally bypassing approved content filtering.

f) Criminal Activity

Use of the **HWCDSB** network for activity that relates to, or is in support of illegal activities shall be reported to the **police**. Activities that shall be reported include (but are not limited to): cyber-bullying, harassment, stalking and criminal threats.

Transmission (receiving or sending) of any material in violation of any Canadian or Ontario **legislation** is prohibited. This includes (but is not limited to) the transmission of: threatening, offensive or obscene material, material suggesting pornography, racism or sexism etc.

Any malicious attempt to manipulate, harm or destroy data or equipment owned by the Board or another user is vandalism. This includes the deliberate infection of computers with viruses. Such activity will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

It should be noted that e-mail and other network activity is not guaranteed to be private. The Director of Education (or designate) has the right to access all email and/or network **and** Internet activities **of users of the HWCDSB network**.

5. The Disciplinary Process

In the event that a student has violated this policy, the student (and the parent/guardian when applicable) will be provided with notice of such violation by the school principal and be given an opportunity to present an explanation.

Disciplinary action will be taken that meets the specific concerns related to the violation and the individual needs of the student and will be consistent with the **HWCDSB Safe Schools Policy**.

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Disciplinary action can include (but not be limited to):

- Suspension, denial and or/restriction of access to the **HWCDSEB** networks;
- Progressive discipline strategies as contained in the **HWCDSEB** Safe Schools Policy;
- Contacting appropriate legal authorities if there is suspicion of illegal activities.

BM 4 Feb 97; 1 Oct 02; 7 Jun 05, 24 Jun 08, 21 Jun 11, 06 May 14

RELATED BY-LAW(S) 7.03

RELATED BOARD COMMITTEE: Religion, Family Life and Instructional Services

POLICY REVIEW DATE: **Five (5) Years**



Acceptable Use Policy - Student Agreement Form

FOR USE OF THE **HWCDSB** COMPUTER NETWORK AND ACCESS TO THE **INTERNET**

After reading the **HWCDSB's** Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Schools document (**version**), please read and fill out the appropriate portions of the following agreement completely and legibly. The signature of a parent or guardian is required where the student is under 18 years of age. Return the agreement to your teacher. Any questions should be addressed to your teacher.

STUDENT'S LAST NAME (print: _____)

STUDENT'S FIRST NAME (print): _____

STUDENT'S CURRENT GRADE: _____

STUDENT'S OEN #: _____

I have read the **HWCDSB's** Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Schools document (**version**). I understand and will abide by the stated terms and conditions for the use of the **HWCDSB** computer network and access to the Internet. I further understand that violation of provincial and federal regulations is unethical and will constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____/_____/_____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN (If the student is under the age of 18, a parent or guardian must also read and sign this agreement).

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read and understand the Internet Acceptable Use Policy for Schools document (**version**). I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. I also recognize that it is impossible to restrict access to all controversial materials acquired on the network. Therefore, on behalf of myself and my child agree to release, indemnify and save harmless the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board, its Director, Trustees, servants, agents and employees from any and all claims, causes of action or demands arising as a result of or in consequence of, directly or indirectly, my child's use of the **HWCDSB** computer network and access to the Internet. I hereby give my permission to issue access privileges for my child and certify that the information contained in this form is correct.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S NAME (print): _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____/_____/_____

Daytime Phone Number: _____ Evening Phone Number: _____

Authorization for the collection and maintenance of this information is the Education Act, R.S.O., 1990, S.266. Users of this information are Supervisory Officers and the principal and teachers of the school for the improvement of instruction of the pupil. This form constitutes an agreement a student or parent/guardian (if student is under the age of 18) has with the Board for use of the **HWCDSB** computer network and access to the Internet. Contact person about the collection of this information is the principal of the school.