

COMMUNICATIONS AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Background

The gathering and dissemination of information regarding HPSPD priorities and operation will increase the awareness, trust, understanding and support of education in HPSPD and broader community.

Guiding Principles

HPSPD will promote an effective two-way communication system internally and externally which encourages:

- student learning;
- recognition and reporting of student achievement and success;
- accurate, timely information about budget, policies, programs, administrative procedures, achievements, decisions and critical issues;
- understanding of decisions and actions;
- programs and practices designed to provide an open climate which will elicit ideas, suggestions and reactions from the community and employees alike;
- an effective working relationship with the news media.

An organizational environment will be established whereby all HPSPD staff members are aware that they share the responsibility for communication of HPSPD and school policies, procedures, programs, and activities to parents, members of the educational staff, agencies, and other communities.

1. Social Media

This administrative procedure is a corporate code of conduct that provides guidance to representatives of HPSPD who engage in social media activities for either personal or professional reasons. Representatives include elected trustees, permanent or temporary staff, contractors, volunteers, or students whose comments may be interpreted as those of HPSPD.

- 1.1. Through the use of social media accounts, HPSPD wishes to provide alternative communication tools to communicate with its stakeholders and thus aligns with its priority of improving internal and external communications. Social media is defined as 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 is for reasons of communication.
- 1.2. There is inherent risk in the participation in all social media activities as actions are publically 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.
- 1.3. Access to all HPSPD and school social media accounts is to be consistent with any acceptable use or network use agreements that HPSPD 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.
- 1.4. This administrative procedure strictly prohibits the violation of any laws, policies of the Board, or professional obligations of any participants in HPSPD or individual HPSPD 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, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy 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.
- 1.5. Social media accounts covered under this administrative procedure include, but are not limited to, HPSPD and/or individual school accounts set up under Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and LinkedIn. This also includes all accounts formed by school councils if the school name is included in the title of the account. This also includes personal accounts where the account holder is a representative of HPSPD as identified above.

Procedures

- 1.6. Supervisors will review this policy annually with their employees and review examples of what is considered to be in violation of this policy. Additionally, this policy will be reviewed at the New Teacher Orientation with all new educators to HPSPD. It will also be reviewed with all other new staff during their hiring process by the Building Manager.
- 1.7. HPSPD division-wide social media accounts shall be administered and monitored by the Communication Department or an individual designated by the Communication Department.
- 1.8. HPSPD approved school-based social media accounts shall be administered and monitored by the Principal or designate and at least one (1) designated staff member.
 - 1.8.1. All schools shall provide the Communication Department with a list of social media pages and sites in use as well as the names of those designated as administrators of those sites.
 - 1.8.2. The Communication Department shall have administrative status on any school-based social media account.
 - 1.8.3. All staff are responsible for representing HPSPD in a positive light.
 - 1.8.4. 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 so as to ensure security of the device and the integrity of the social media site and network.
- 1.9. Social media is intended to complement HPSPD and school websites. Whenever possible, use accepted linking practices that can update social media sites when updating sections of the school's website.
- 1.10. Recommended updates for social media accounts include but are not limited to school news, sports event results, calendar of events listings, 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 HPSPD.
- 1.11. All postings, including photos, are subject to applicable provincial and federal legislation and HPSPD FOIPP and copyright policies or procedures at all times.
 - 1.11.1. With the exception of public events, any names or pictures that are used where individuals are identifiable, need to have proper permissions granted prior to publication on any social media site.
 - 1.11.2. Users of social media shall comply with all copyright laws.
 - 1.11.3. Social media accounts should be updated regularly to keep the site engaging.
- 1.12. Account administrators and the Communication Department or designate, reserve the right to delete any posting, photo, comment, or mention that violates the policies of HPSPD or that is degrading, discriminatory, defamatory, or offensive in any manner or brings the reputation of anyone, the school, or HPSPD into disrepute.
 - 1.12.1. All social media accounts must be monitored by account administrators and the Communication Department or designate, on a regular basis to ensure the appropriateness of comments.
 - 1.12.2. Removal of a post or discussion may be done at the Communication Department's or Principal's discretion.
- 1.13. Trustees, permanent or temporary staff, contractors, volunteers, or students with HPSPD approved accounts are personally responsible for the content published online through social media.
- 1.14. HPSPD approved social media accounts shall include the following disclaimers on their sites for purposes of transparency and accountability to our stakeholders:

"HPSPD values open, two-way conversation to foster a collaborative and effective engagement process with our stakeholders. Our official social media accounts provide forums for respectful discussions related to education and to share and celebrate relevant stories, events, and other information.

Ensure that posts are respectful of our HPSPD community and are consistent with our policies and procedures. Individuals who do not follow the guidelines below will have their posts removed and/or blocked from the sites:

- *Obscene, racial, or disrespectful comments or posts will not be allowed.*

- *Comments that are abusive, hateful, or intended to defame anyone or any organization will not be permitted.*
- *Users participate at their own risk, taking personal responsibility for comments, username, and any information provided.*

HPSD also reserves the right to delete and/or ban individuals whose comments 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/or violate HPSP Board policies and/or administrative procedures. The comments and posts expressed on our social media accounts do not necessarily reflect the opinions and/or position of the HPSP Board or its employees.”

- 1.15. Staff members responsible for the administration of social media accounts on behalf of an HPSP school or HPSP account will endeavor to respond to public requests for information in a timely manner.
 - 1.15.1. Responses to questions posted online may be provided directly to the individual who made the query rather than online if deemed more appropriate.
 - 1.15.2. Misleading or inaccurate information about HPSP will be acknowledged and corrected where required.

2. Media Relations

The Superintendent is responsible to ensure positive external and internal communications are developed and maintained. The news media are an important vehicle through which HPSP can inform the public and increase public awareness of education.

Procedures

- 2.1. The Superintendent will make available a summary report, along with a copy of the unapproved Board minutes, to local media outlets.
- 2.2. The Superintendent shall approve all information released to the media from the Learning Support Centre (LSC).
- 2.3. The Principal shall approve all information released to the media from schools. This responsibility cannot be delegated without approval from the Superintendent.
- 2.4. Media representatives shall not be allowed to disrupt the normal operation of the LSC, a school or a class for the sole purpose of information gathering. This includes the interviewing of HPSP employees and/or students during the regular school day without the permission of the school Principal or Building Manager.
- 2.5. Media representatives may be asked by the Principal or HPSP staff to leave the premises or grounds where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the students and staff to do so.

Note: *Information releases, which accurately communicate the Board’s business to the public, may only be issued by persons authorized by the Board as per Policy 5.*

3. School Community Communications

HPSP encourages its schools to develop and distribute school information through a variety of mediums and other appropriate devices as a means of communication between the school and home.

3.1. Websites

- 3.1.1. School websites are mandatory for all schools. Principals shall designate at least one (1) staff member to regularly update information on the school website. Information that shall be kept up-to-date includes:
 - 3.1.1.1. Calendar of upcoming events (note: HPSP shall maintain all division-wide events on school calendars including but not limited to board meetings, professional development days, diploma exams, and holidays)
 - 3.1.1.2. Banner images
 - 3.1.1.3. News items

- 3.1.2. Supply lists and school handbooks for the upcoming school year shall be posted on the school website before the last day of school in the current school year.
- 3.1.3. Bell times shall be updated before the first day of school for students.
- 3.1.4. The Three-Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report shall be posted on the website by the date specified by the Superintendent.
- 3.1.5. Teacher webpages are mandatory for all teachers. The following are requirements for all teacher pages:
 - 3.1.5.1. Short biography
 - 3.1.5.2. Course outlines (for teachers in kindergarten through Grade 6, use the following link from Alberta Education outlining the parent resources www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning/)
 - 3.1.5.3. "Contact Me" page (auto-generated during setup)
 - 3.1.5.4. Significant class events listed on the calendar or main teacher page

3.2. Messaging Systems

HPSD uses a messaging system to deliver phone, text, and email notifications to parents/guardians. This system shall be the preferred method of mass communication with parents and guardians. It will not replace regular face-to-face and phone conversations that shall take place between HPSP staff and parents/guardians. Other messaging systems, not supported by HPSP, will be phased out by the end of the 2019-20 school year.

3.3. Other

- 3.3.1. The Principal may direct staff to distribute information via newsletters, posters, pamphlets, letters home, or other methods at their discretion to ensure effective communication between home and school.
- 3.3.2. When addressing situations/concerns/complaints related to HPSP that have the potential to become volatile in the community or online, it is the responsibility of the employee to notify their supervisor who is then to notify the Superintendent.

4. **Crisis Communications**

- 4.1. When an emergency occurs, HPSP staff must notify their supervisor who must then report the emergency to the Superintendent.
- 4.2. An emergency is defined as a serious and/or unexpected and potentially dangerous situation, either present or imminent, requiring immediate action to protect the health, safety, or well-being of people or to limit damage of property. An emergency can range in scope and intensity from incidents directly or indirectly affecting a single student to ones impacting an entire school community. An emergency can happen before, during, or after school and on or off school property.
- 4.3. During an emergency, all communications to parents/guardians, staff, government, and other parties shall come from the Information Officer as per Hour Zero protocol.
- 4.4. Message maps may be prepared for an emergency at the discretion of the Superintendent.
 - 4.4.1. Message maps of a sensitive and confidential nature are intended for the recipient and are not to be distributed.
 - 4.4.2. Message map recipients shall not discuss any details of the emergency other than those directly listed in the "Key Messages" area and the "Supporting Information" area.
 - 4.4.3. The sharing of any additional information may be considered a breach of confidentiality.

5. **Brand Compliance**

HPSP is committed to being recognized as a leader in providing quality public education. This shall be realized through strict brand compliance to ensure all messaging, promotions, and brand imagery is consistent and professional.

- 5.1. Only approved logos shall be used to represent HPSP.
- 5.2. Logos shall not be altered in any way without permission from the Communication Department. This includes but is not limited to recoloring, skewing, cropping, distorting, manipulating the approved logos.

- 5.3. Logos shall not be shared with third parties without permission from the Communication Department. HPSD reserves the right to revoke access or veto any work or publication with the HPSD logo.
- 5.4. Any use of the HPSD logo by external organization or parties on any advertisements or promotional material must be approved by the Communication Department.
- 5.5. Any changes to school/HPSD logos shall be approved by the Board.

References

Education Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Cross References

Policy 1 – Division Vision Statement and Values

Policy 2 – Role of the Board

Policy 3 – Role of the Trustee

Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Ethics

Policy 5 – Role of the Board Chair

Administrative Procedure 140 – Use of Information Technology

Administrative Procedure 170 – Freedom of Information and Protection Privacy (FOIPP)

Administrative Procedure 176 – Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention

Administrative Procedure 190 – Use of Copyrighted Material

Administrative Procedure 209 – Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environments

Administrative Procedure 339 – Concerns and Complaints - Parents

Administrative Procedure 340 – Code of Conduct

Administrative Procedure 402 – Concerns and Complaints - Employees