

Dedham Public School Web 2.0 Policy

For Safe Collaboration and Publication of Student Online Work

Purpose

The Dedham Public School District (DPS) realizes that part of 21st century learning is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The importance of teachers, students and parents engaging, collaborating, learning, and sharing in these digital environments is a part of 21st century learning. Students need to develop digital citizenship skills to participate online safely. Educators need to structure authentic learning to allow students to experience online interaction, make wise choices and be cautious in an online community. The District staff has the responsibility to present a monitored, supervised environment providing graduated freedoms from younger to older students based on student maturity.

Therefore, DPS has developed the following policy with guidelines to provide direction for instructional employees, students and the school district community when participating in online social media activities (i.e. Social bookmarking, blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, podcasts, and other Web 2.0 tools used to collaborate or publish student work).

General Guidelines

DPS social media guidelines encourage students and staff to work, learn, and share information collaboratively using Web 2.0 tools. Our Learning Management System (LMS) offers many of these tools in a secure, controlled environment. To maintain a safe environment for the students, online activities should take place within the LMS setting whenever possible. It is important to create an atmosphere of trust and individual accountability, keeping in mind that information produced by DPS staff and students is a reflection on the entire District and is subject to the District's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Internet Safety Policy.

Dedham Public Schools and its staff have a legal and ethical responsibility to provide a safe learning environment. Therefore:

- All asynchronous interaction must be archived. Recorded sessions will serve as documented proof of interaction among staff, students, and other individuals.
- One-to-one, private postings should be avoided. Interaction should involve monitored group participation. If one-on-one interaction using collaborative Web 2.0 tools is necessary, the session must be recorded and archived (i.e. homework help, wikis, blogs, and virtual classrooms).
- Teachers must instruct students to archive any inappropriate online postings that may appear. Use the "print screen" button to capture the post, save the image to a document, and report the incident.
- Teachers must remind students that online conversations must be saved or recorded (i.e. homework help).
- One-to-one live interaction should be avoided. Real-time collaboration must include groups of students with adult supervision.
- If recording is not possible, multiple observers are required during synchronous collaborative interaction (i.e. Skype).
- Postings and permanent records may not be deleted by a student. If a record or posting needs to be deleted, the staff member must save a copy prior to removing the inappropriate material.
- Parents and direct supervisors of staff have the capability to be online classroom observers using Dedham's LMS.

The growing use of social media (online posting and collaboration) should be considered an extension of the classroom. Any online activities that would not be appropriate in the classroom should not be conducted online. School policy and consequences extend to the online learning environment.

Personnel and students should at all times respect the privacy of the community. Do not divulge or post online personal information about any members of the school community without permission. High standards for appropriate online communication must be maintained. Digital information may leave a long-lasting or even permanent record with the possibility of becoming public without your knowledge or consent. School personnel

must take great care in any online interactions with students to maintain professional standards of conduct. Staff must:

- Remind students that they are participating in an educational online environment and understand the distinction between personal posting and academic activities.
- Remind students that using Web 2.0 tools is a privilege that must be supervised and monitored for the safety of those involved.
- Exclude student's last name (PK-8) when posting online and remind students to do the same.
- Review Web 2.0 tool-specific guidelines with students prior to assigning projects.
- Respect copyright and fair use guidelines and remind students to do the same. (<http://www.dedham.k12.ma.us/technology/policies/>).
- Understand the privacy settings, options, and implementation strategies before using online tools with students.
- When appropriate educational versions of Web 2.0 tools that protect the privacy of students and staff are available, they must be used.
- Monitor student online publishing and postings to insure compliance with the student AUP and Internet Safety Policy.
- Monitor class and educational resource wikis, blogs, discussion forums, email or LMS courses.
- Report any inappropriate online behavior to administration. District and staff have a legal responsibility to provide a safe learning environment.

Guidelines for Social Media Tools

Social Bookmarking

- Examine the entire site or article for appropriateness prior to linking to a resource.
- Understand that others can view the sites bookmarked..
- Be aware of words used to *tag* or describe the bookmark.
- Be cautious of URL shortening services (i.e. Tinyurl). Verify the landing site to which they point before submitting a link as a bookmark. It is best to use the original URL.
- Attempt to link directly to a page or resource if possible as you cannot control what appears on the landing pages in the future.
- Investigate the social bookmarking tool to check for appropriate privacy settings (i.e. Diigo Educator accounts have default privacy settings that limit communication to classmates and teachers only).

Posting Student Work:

Blogs, Microblogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Vodcasts, and Other Web 2.0 Publishing Tools

- Provide students with online publishing guidelines prior to use. Teach students safe and appropriate behavior as online authors and readers.
- Recognize online collaboration as a closed conversation for members of the class and do not open any postings to people who are not enrolled in the class.
- Monitor all postings for offensive language or subject material.
- Monitor all student online work for cyber bullying.
- Protect student privacy at all times by not publishing a student's full name (K-8) or any other identifying information.
- Use online tools as a direct correlation to subject material taught in class and not for social networking (i.e. Do not use social networking for personal conversations or interactions not related to the curriculum topic).
- Set consequences for online misuse.

RSS Feeds (Really Simple Syndication)

RSS feeds are a group of web feed formats used to publish digital content from blogs, news feeds, or podcasts. A news site can automatically feed its contents to a group of subscribers. This allows the user to monitor several sites at one time, aggregating content from blogs, ezines, newspapers, and broadcast news.

- Preview all feeds before using in the classroom.

- Be aware of the currency and age appropriateness of topics and graphics.
- Be cautious of advertising that may be on sites as they may not be suitable for student viewing.
- Consider capturing the previewed content to share with students to insure availability of data and appropriateness.

Copyright and Fair Use

Dedham Public School's Copyright Policy can be found on the Dedham website (<http://www.dedham.k12.ma.us/technology/policies/>). Information pertaining to Fair Use may also be found on this web page.

- Must insist on adherence to copyright and fair use guidelines when students use any resources to create projects.
- Realize all material (audio, visual, print) that can be accessed through the Internet is subject to copyright laws.
- Always check for permission to use copyrighted material in your own work.
- Reinforce the need for citing resources following MLA format.

Pilot Requests

Staff members wishing to utilize other Internet and/or web-based tools that are not covered in this Web 2.0 Policy should take the following steps:

- Review the Dedham Acceptable Use Policy and Internet Safety Policy to insure the proposed tool will follow the guidelines stated.
- Prepare a proposal for the use of the web-based tool stating the course name, staff member, purpose of the tool, how the tool enhances teaching and learning, and timeframe of use.
- Include steps to be taken to insure the safety of staff and students utilizing the tool (i.e. How are you going to keep the students safe in and outside of school?)
- Detail who will be involved in monitoring the students so that multiple adults are involved on a regular basis.
- Describe the steps that will be taken to protect the district and its staff members from claims of negligence during tool use (i.e. How will the District's reputation and legal responsibilities be protected?)
- Submit the pilot request for approval to the Director of Technology.

If you are uncertain about any content of this policy, contact the Director of Technology before implementing the Web 2.0 tool.

Sources:

- (1) <http://socialmediaguidelines.pbworks.com> (Creative Commons attribution)
- (2) <http://socialmediaguidelines.pbworks.com/Faculty-and-Staff-Guidelines>
- (3) http://isenet.ning.com/forum/topics/social-networking-policy-for?xg_source=activity
- (4) <http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/62228.aspx>

Approved by School Committee October 6, 2010