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RELATED POLICIES:	See References
REPEALS:	
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1.0 OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 To provide staff and students with guidelines for the appropriate legal and ethical use of electronic communications (email) within the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board (WECDSB).

2.0 GUIDELINES

- 2.1 The use of email as a business and collaboration tool carries with it a need to be aware of appropriate safeguards of personal privacy. Staff and students must be aware that the creation of an email constitutes the creation of a record for the organization. As such, the records may become subject to disclosure during a Freedom of Information or other request.
- 2.2 The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) regulates the privacy protection practices of all Ontario School Boards. MFIPPA sets out and provides direction on how we collect, use, disclose and destroy personal information while protecting the individual's right to privacy, however recorded, whether in printed form, on film, by electronic means or otherwise. Refer to PR IT:01F Privacy Protection and Information Management Procedure.
- 2.3 **CASL** (Canada's Anti Spam Legislation) prohibits the sending of commercial electronic messages (CEMs) without the recipients consent (permission), including messages to email addresses and social networking accounts, and text messages to a cell phone. Examples of CEMs include emails or text messages to inform people of promotions, advertising or offers for sale of such things as school pictures, field trips, fun fairs, pizza or hot dog days, yearbooks or fundraising events or where there may be personal gain. Additional information regarding CASL can be found at <http://fightspam.gc.ca>.

3.0 PROCEDURE FOR STAFF

- 3.1 Staff using Board email need to be aware of and respect an individual's right to privacy. While it may be necessary to share personal information about an individual during the normal course of doing business, care needs to be taken that only pertinent and factual information is included in the message.
- 3.2 Automatic forwarding of Board email to an outside mail service (Gmail, Hotmail, or other external email address) is not permitted. These accounts may not have the same privacy safeguards as Board email accounts. Board business email needs to remain in the Board

email accounts.

- 3.3 Personal information about an individual must never be put in a public email conference. Public conferences are accessible to any employee with a Board account.
- 3.4 Board staff need to be aware that the Board's email system may contain both staff and student names when searching or addressing email.
- 3.5 Email messages that contain personal information should only contain factual information. Remembering that email messages may be subject to search and disclosure, care should be taken to keep the tone and contents of the email professional at all times.
- 3.6 Staff are responsible for protecting personal, confidential and sensitive information entrusted to them in their professional role. Staff must report any suspicion of a privacy breach to the Board's Freedom of Information (FOI) Coordinator.
- 3.7 Staff who are terminated will have their account disabled by Information Technology (I.T.) services when notification is received from Human Resources.

4.0 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS

- 4.1 All students receive an email address.
- 4.2 Student email addresses must never be shared by staff outside of classroom communities (i.e. with the public or with parents who are not the parent/legal guardian of the student).
- 4.3 Students are to report any concerns for safety or inappropriate messages to their teacher.
- 4.4 Students who are no longer active with the Board will have their accounts disabled after 35 days.

5.0 RULES, BEST PRACTICES AND ETIQUETTE

- 5.1 Email as a tool should be used in conjunction with the Board's Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy and Procedures.
- 5.2 Messages should be professional, courteous and respectful at all times. It is necessary to keep email messages within the bounds of good taste and free of obscenities. Topics of a volatile or controversial nature should be dealt with maturely, realizing that points of view can, and will, vary. If a message is created "in the heat of the moment", be aware that it is difficult to convey emotion in an email and your message may be open to misinterpretation.
- 5.3 Spamming is the sending of the same message to a large number of users and is not allowed.
- 5.4 Shouting or yelling occurs when messages are typed with the "cap lock" key down.

While capitalizing a single work or two for emphasis may be appropriate, shouting conveys the wrong emotion and makes the message more difficult to read.

- 5.5 When replying to a message that has been sent to multiple recipients, determine whether your reply should be received by everyone, or only by the sender, and adjust your recipients accordingly.
- 5.6 Messages should have a subject line to allow readers to determine the content of your message. When replying to a message, consideration should be given as to whether the original subject line is still appropriate. If not, the subject line should be changed to something that better reflects the message contents.
- 5.7 The use of cc: (carbon copy) is intended to alert someone to a message. The person who is carbon copied on a message should not expect to have to reply. If a response is required, then the recipient's name should appear in the To: line.
- 5.8 The use of bcc: (blind carbon copy) is used when you wish to hide the names of recipients from one another. The sender of the message can see the entire list of recipients, but the blind carbon copied recipient can only see their name and the name of the sender.
- 5.9 All staff email should include an email "signature", which includes the person's name, title, location and contact information. Signatures should be updated whenever your name, title, location or contact information changes. Signature may include a brief quotation, but it must be remembered that this is a business communications tool, so quotations must be short, appropriate and within the bounds of good taste.
- 5.10 Staff are to include a disclaimer in the signature area of their email. This disclaimer would help to protect the Board and the sender if the message was misdirected. The Board's official disclaimer is:

The information in this e-mail is intended solely for the addressee(s) named, and is confidential. Any other distribution, disclosure or copying is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please reply by e-mail to the sender and delete or destroy all copies of this message and any attachments.
- 5.11 Although the Board's firewall and content filtering programs scan incoming email for the presence of viruses, spam and junk email, occasionally some may slip through. If you receive suspicious email, do not open it. Delete it.
- 5.12 Do not download or open any attachments if you are unsure. Contact the original sender to verify that they sent the message and the email is legitimate.
- 5.13 Consideration should be given when an email addressed to you must be forwarded to another person or conference.
- 5.14 Staff and students are solely responsible for the maintenance of their personal mailboxes, including filing, printing, organizing and deleting messages, saving and printing of attachments, and tracking messages for which they are accountable.
- 5.15 Staff and students should check their mailbox as frequently as possible, and promptly

delete messages from their account.

6.0 LIABILITY

- 6.1 There is no ultimate guarantee of confidentiality of messages on this (or any other) email system. Despite the best technical efforts, messages can be inadvertently forwarded, copied or indiscriminately replied to using the “Reply All” function. All account holders should assume that the contents of their messages may at some point be public knowledge, and treat their correspondence accordingly.
- 6.2 In response to a Freedom of Information or other request, staff and/or student email can be searched. Staff and students should not have an expectation of privacy when using the Board email system.
- 6.3 Email is to be used only to further the Board’s objectives, and is the Board’s property. As part of regular, day-to-day business operations, the Board does not monitor email. Should a specific need arise, the Director or his/her Designate can request that specific Board email be monitored.
- 6.4 The WECDSB make no warranties of any nature or kind, expressed or implied, regarding its online services or resources, the continued operation of these services, the equipment and facilities used and their capacities, or the suitability, operability and safety of any programs or file posted on WECDSB systems for any intended purpose.

7.0 DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

- 7.1 Inappropriate use of email or any electronic communication tool by staff and students could result in disciplinary action that may include legal action and/or involvement of police.