



Niagara Catholic District School Board
***ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS
SYSTEMS (STUDENTS)***

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

300 – Schools/Students

No 301.5

Adopted Date: March 28, 2006

Latest Reviewed/Revised Date: May 28, 2024

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for Electronic Communications Systems (Students).

PREAMBLE

The Board recognizes the educational value of students utilizing electronic communications systems for the purpose of enhancing their learning through the responsible access to global information and communication. The Board further recognizes the critical role that parents play in educating their children on the appropriate use of electronic communication systems and in monitoring their use of these systems.

This partnership of parents and schools is essential in achieving success in ensuring appropriate use of this ever-changing technology.

These Administrative Operational Procedures govern acceptable student use of the internet and electronic resources provided by the Niagara Catholic District School Board in all of its elementary and secondary schools and use of personal devices.

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that students may have in their possession personal electronic devices while at school or at school related activities. Students are permitted to bring in personal electronic devices to be used in wireless enabled common areas throughout the school as approved by the administration and in classrooms when and where approved by the classroom teacher. These procedures govern the acceptable use of personal electronic systems by students while at school. The use of these devices are prohibited where they are deemed to interfere with student learning. Academic and administrative staff at the school and/or at the Board level shall determine what, if any, use is interfering with learning. Access to the Board's electronic communication services is a privilege that may be partially or wholly restricted by the Board at any time.

The Ontario Code of Conduct, the Niagara Catholic District School Board Code of Conduct Policy and the Safe and Accepting Schools Policy provide disciplinary consequences for students who violate these Administrative Operational Procedures.

STUDENT HANDBOOKS

In accordance with the Electronic Communications Systems (Students) Administrative Operational Procedures No. 301.5, all elementary and secondary schools within the Niagara Catholic District School Board will reference the Administrative Operational Procedures in Student Handbooks or Agendas.

DEFINITIONS

Electronic Communications - Any electronic engagement with others, including, but not limited to, telephone, email, texting, video chat software, blogs, websites, and social media platforms.

Electronic Communications Systems - Systems used to access or store digital files or information, including, but not limited to, a computer's internal hard drive, external hard drive, internet (hard-wired and Wi-Fi), and the cloud.

Social Media - Platforms that enable users to create and share content or participate in online communications with others (social networking). These include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Personal Device - Equipment owned and maintained by the student at their own expense. This includes but is not limited to any electronic device such as laptop, tablet, mobile phone, wearable technology, wireless speaker and medical monitoring device.

Board-Issued Device - Equipment owned and maintained by the Niagara Catholic District School Board provided to students.

Personal Use - Use of electronic communications unrelated to the student's current curriculum.

Educational Use - Use of electronic communications related to the student's current grade and/or curriculum.

Common Area – Spaces defined and outlined by the Principal or person in charge of that building.

ETIQUETTE

1. The Niagara Catholic District School Board in keeping with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Code of Conduct provides safe schools that respect the rights and freedoms of every individual.
2. While security and firewall filters are in place, students are prohibited from knowingly accessing or participating in, but not limited to: religiously, racially, or culturally offensive sites; inappropriate email/text messaging/social media correspondence; commercial, gambling, racist, abusive, profane, pornographic, violent, discriminatory or harassing on-line systems or sites.
3. The use of the Board's electronic communications systems must reflect the highest standard of courtesy. Students are to be mindful of the tone of their messaging when engaging online with others. Profanity, vulgar language, sarcasm, the use of full capitalization (to indicate yelling) or the use of disrespectful language is unacceptable in any correspondence.
4. Students must not send or post messages of a bullying, fraudulent, defamatory, intimidating, violent, unlawful or sexually explicit nature.
5. The creation or distribution of disparaging statements about the Board, other employees, unions, departments, students, parents/guardians, or community partners or trolling others online via any form of electronic communications system is strictly prohibited.
6. Students must not engage in any activity intended to conceal their own identity or to misrepresent themselves as someone else. Such action may result in discipline.
7. Students must only engage with staff using email accounts or tools that have been provided to them by

the Board for Board/School-related correspondence and activities as explicitly approved by the Administration of the Board or School.

RECORDS

All messages sent on Niagara Catholic District School Board communication systems are Board records and the Board reserves the right to access and disclose the content of such messages.

PRIVACY

1. All students are to be aware that the Board's network does not ensure any privacy to the user. Students are to take all reasonable steps to maintain the confidentiality of other students, staff, and all other personal information.
2. All electronic communications facilitated via Board networks and systems are property of the Board. All of these communications may be accessed by the Board if requested and may be subject to disclosure via the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

GENERAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS

1. Students assume full responsibility for using all Board communication systems in an ethical and appropriate educational manner in compliance with the mission, vision, beliefs of the Niagara Catholic District School Board.
2. Students are to obtain permission from a teacher to use Board computer systems, tablets, laptops, or other classroom technology.
3. Students are permitted to bring in personal electronic devices to be used in Board authorized wireless enabled common areas throughout the school as approved by the Principal and in classrooms where approved by the teacher.
4. Students vandalizing, modifying or causing damage to electronic communication systems or computing devices, including software, will be responsible for the full cost to repair or replace hardware or software.
5. Students are prohibited from removing any computer hardware or computer components from its location; attempting to gain unauthorized access to Board electronic communication systems, computing devices, networks or data; accessing any e-mail or download any material that knowingly contains a virus.
6. Students are to adhere to and respect all copyright laws.
7. Students who have permission to post information to the Internet are to have the classroom teacher review the work before it is posted in order to ensure that it is consistent with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
8. Students are to report to their teacher or Principal any abuse of electronic communications systems.
9. The use of Board computers, wireless access and Internet access is a privilege and any breach may result in the closure of user accounts, cancellation of computer and Internet privileges and disciplinary action in accordance with Board Policy and the Code of Conduct.

10. All electronic communications transactions, including all data and messages generated on, or processed by Niagara Catholic equipment, are the sole property of the Board and may be viewed, tracked, or stored when required.
12. Niagara Catholic staff are required to fully co-operate with law enforcement when necessary. This includes investigations which are conducted that involve the Board's electronic communications systems. Data from these systems may be provided to the authorities when required by law.

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Policy/Program Memorandum 128 sets clear standards on the use of mobile devices during instructional time. All members of the school community must not use personal mobile devices during instructional time except under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
- for health and medical purposes
- to support special education needs

For grades 7 to 12 students' personal mobile devices are stored out of view and powered off or set to silent mode during instructional time, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

- If the educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view, they must require the device be handed in for the instructional period and the device must be placed, by the student, in a storage area in a location in the classroom designated by the educator.

For grade 6 and below students' personal mobile devices are stored out of view and powered off or set to silent mode throughout the full instructional day, except when their use is explicitly permitted by the educator under the circumstances outlined above.

- If an educator sees a personal mobile device that is not stored out of view, they must require the device be handed in for the instructional day and the device must be placed, by the student, in a storage area in a location designated by the principal.

Students are responsible for their personal mobile device, how they use it and the consequences of not following the Board policy on personal mobile device use.

If a student does not hand in their personal mobile device when required, the student must be sent to the Principal's office. Principals have discretion under PPM No. 145, Progressive discipline and promoting positive student behaviour, to consider a range of responses to address this behaviour including suspension.

Cell and smart phones, as well as other personal electronic devices, are eligible for appropriate student use in wireless enabled common areas of the schools (at appropriate times and intervals) as approved by the administration of the school for instructional and co-instructional purposes.

The Board and its staff assume no responsibility for the use, safety, security, loss, recovery, repair or replacement of a personal electronic device on Board premises. The secure storage of these devices is the sole responsibility of the owner/user.

Devices designed to disrupt computing or networking services whether wired or wireless are strictly prohibited.

PERSONAL SECURITY

In addition to following the acceptable use guidelines listed above, Niagara Catholic recommends the following rules when students are outside the Niagara Catholic School Board Network:

- Never arrange to get together with someone “met” online, unless you have parental permission.
- Do not respond to any illicit or suspicious activities, and immediately report them to your teacher or principal.
- Do not engage in any activity that may violate the Niagara Catholic Safety and Violence Prevention Policy.
- Beware of emails from anyone, particularly adults you do not know, asking for personal information. Attempting to arrange meetings, or engaging in personal contact.
- Alert your teacher or Principal of any message you receive that is inappropriate and makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Never say anything via email that you would not mind seeing in a local newspaper.

Niagara Catholic cannot guarantee the appropriateness or accuracy of the information that students may access on the Internet outside of our network. For those students who access Niagara Catholic from a home computer, parents should be aware of this and monitor their children’s communications and use of the Internet.

INAPPROPRIATE/UNACCEPTABLE USE OF THE BOARD'S ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

It is an expectation that students will use Niagara Catholic District School Board electronic communications systems for educational purposes to enhance learning through responsible access to global information and communication. Social media platforms can only be used by students at school for educational purposes, directed by an educator.

Students are prohibited from:

INAPPROPRIATE USE	DESCRIPTION
Acting on behalf of a school or the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negligent misrepresentations on behalf of a school or the Board or making statements on behalf of a school or the Board when you are not authorized to do so is prohibited.
Chain Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating or forwarding chain mail is prohibited.
Confidential Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing and/or disseminating contact information or confidential information for improper purposes is prohibited.
Controversial Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of the internet may occasionally encounter material that is controversial and which other students, parents or staff might consider inappropriate or offensive. • It is the responsibility of the individual student not to intentionally access such material.
Criminal Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any activity that constitutes a violation of the Criminal Code and/or other laws is prohibited.
Cryptocurrency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cryptocurrency mining or other forms of computing processing power or storage capability mining or exploitation is prohibited.
Defamatory Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making or distributing inappropriate statements about other students, teachers, other staff and/or a school or the Board (defamation and insubordination) is prohibited.
Deliberate Damage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately causing any physical damage to a Board device.

Disruptive Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Usage of devices or technologies which are known to cause or could reasonably be expected to cause service disruption to Board or school electronic communication systems services are strictly prohibited.
Dissemination of any Material that does not Benefit the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disseminating or storing commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, personal promotions, political lobbying, destructive programs (i.e. viruses) or uses of this nature are prohibited.
Hacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Computer hacking of programs, technology, websites, or personal accounts; even hacking one considers to be “ethical” in nature is prohibited.
Hardware Modification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Modification (upgrading or removing) of hardware components and peripherals without authorization. ● Any damages and/or labor charges resulting from unauthorized modifications will be the responsibility of the student or the student’s parents involved.
Hardware Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Movement of hardware and peripherals (from its assigned location in the school) is prohibited without authorization from a Principal.
Identity Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sending email or other electronic communications which hide the identity of the sender or represents the sender as someone else.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Borrowing, copying or reusing other's information without their consent and/or knowledge.
Inappropriate Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Users of the internet shall not intentionally access inappropriate material on the internet.
Inappropriate Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sending messages, or posting messages on social media, of a bullying, fraudulent, defamatory, discriminating, embarrassing, fraudulent, harassing, intimidating, obscene, profane, sexually explicit, threatening or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate (including graphics) nature is prohibited. ● Users encountering or receiving these kinds of messages or materials should immediately report the incident to their Principal. The Principal, in turn, shall report the incident to the appropriate Superintendent.
Interference of another person’s data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Erasing, damaging, or copying files of another user.
Interference with Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using electronic communication systems to distract or interfere with the learning environment;
Manipulation of non-Personal Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manipulating files that are not on a personal account.
Misrepresentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Misrepresenting oneself or the Board while using electronic communications systems;
Personal Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The dissemination of personal information contrary to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is prohibited.
Pornographic Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Viewing pornographic material is prohibited.

Profiteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using of Board devices, network or internet in order to profit is prohibited
Promotion of Controlled Substances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encouraging the use of controlled substances or the use of the system for the purpose of inciting crime.
Proprietary Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The dissemination of proprietary information is prohibited.
Software Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The installation of any software that is not authorized by the Board and for which the Board does not have the appropriate license is strictly prohibited.
Soliciting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soliciting or advocating non-Board, non-School or personal interests;
Tampering with Settings and/or Configurations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tampering with computer settings, network configurations or desktop settings.
Unauthorized Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attaching unauthorized devices to a computer or network.
Use of Another Person's Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using any other person's account on any system;
Use of Non-Authorized Hardware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-Board owned hardware and peripherals (excluding external memory cards) may not be physically connected (hard wired) to the network or Internet at any Board site, without the express permission of Family of Schools Superintendents.

Violation of Software Agreements or Copyright Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Violating terms of software licensing agreements and copyright laws;
USB Use Without Permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using external storage devices (i.e., USB devices) without permission;
Use of VPN (Virtual Private Networking)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilizing virtual private networking software or any kind to bypass Board controls and protections;
Any other inappropriate behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Performing any other activity using the Board's electronic communication systems that is deemed inappropriate.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Students are to report to their teacher or Principal any abuse of electronic communications systems. Principals will determine the appropriate consequence for students who violate Electronic Communications (Students) Administrative Operational Procedures in consultation with the Family of Schools' Superintendent.

References:

- [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
- [Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario](#)
- [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Ontario College of Teachers, Professional Advisory: Maintaining Professionalism-Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media UPDATED, September 2017](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
- [Provincial Code of Conduct](#)

- **Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures**
 - [Safe and Accepting Schools Policy \(302.6\)](#)
 - [Electronic Communications Systems \(Employees\) Policy \(201.12\)](#)
 - [Privacy Policy \(600.6\)](#)
 - [Diabetes \(302.1.3\) AOP](#)

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