

Responsible Use of Digital Technology

RATIONALE:

Students need digital skills that will allow them to adapt and thrive. The appropriate and acceptable use of digital technology is critical in facilitating this skill set, often referred to as digital literacy. This encompasses the ability to find, use, summarize, evaluate, create, and communicate digital information effectively and safely.

HWDSB staff have a role to play in upholding high expectations and modeling responsible digital citizenship for students. A growing number of professions require technological proficiency, including the education sector. By providing students with access to and guidance in the use of digital technology, schools are preparing them for future careers and equipping them with skills that will be beneficial, and by being proficient and responsible users of technology, educators provide relevant, authentic experiences in HWDSB classrooms. By demonstrating appropriate online behavior and adhering to the Ontario College of Teachers' ethical standards, educators can teach students about online etiquette, privacy, copyright, and cyber safety.

While the benefits are significant, the acceptable usage of digital technology requires guidelines to protect students from potential risks, and to ensure staff model responsible use of digital technology. It is important for all stakeholders to understand that expectations for behavior are the same in both physical and digital spaces, and that the use of digital tools in schools comes with responsibilities and high expectations for behaviour.

TERMINOLOGY:

Digital Tools: Any electronic digital device, including but not limited to mobile and desktop or laptop technology, tablets, smartphones, cameras, digital voice recorders, etc.

Personal Electronic Devices: Digital technology owned by students or staff and brought to school or work.

Responsible use of digital technology: Actions and behaviors that align with HWDSB policies and procedures, specifically the Code of Conduct Policy and the Modern Learning Policy and its procedures.

Digital Literacy: The ability to solve problems using technology in a safe, legal, and ethically responsible manner. With the ever-expanding role of digitalization and big data in the modern world, digital literacy also means having strong data literacy skills and the ability to engage with emerging technologies. Digitally literate students recognize the rights and responsibilities, as well as the opportunities, that come with living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world.

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Student Descriptors:

- Students select and use appropriate digital tools to collaborate, communicate, create, innovate, and solve problems.
- Students understand how to manage and regulate their use of technology to support their mental health and well-being.
- Students use digital tools to define and plan data searches, collect data, and identify relevant data sets. They analyze, interpret, and graphically represent, or “visualize”, data in various ways to solve problems and inform decisions.
- Students demonstrate a willingness and confidence to explore and use new or unfamiliar digital tools and emerging technologies (e.g., open-source software, wikis, robotics, augmented reality). Students understand how different technologies are connected and recognize their benefits and limitations.
- Students manage their digital footprint by engaging in social media and online communities respectfully, inclusively, safely, legally, and ethically. Students understand their rights with respect to personal data and know how to protect their privacy and security and respect the privacy and security of others.
- Students analyze and understand the impact of technological advancements on society, and society’s role in the evolution of technology ([Transferable skills \(gov.on.ca\)](#))

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Responsible Use of Digital Technology

- 1.1 Contributes to safe, accepting, and inclusive learning and working environments.
- 1.2 Supports learning, and foster citizenship, inclusion, and acceptance.
- 1.3 Supports students in the development of transferable skills, including digital literacy.
- 1.4 Includes only using board provisioned devices and personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops, and tablets) for learning during instructional time, unless authorized by the principal or school staff.
- 1.5 Provides and/or allows access to digital devices to:
 - Provide health or medical support.
 - Support learning needs.
 - Provide digital literacy learning opportunities.
 - Support accessibility.
 - Facilitate barrier-free access to learning opportunities.

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1.6 Requires the behavior in the digital world meeting the same expectations as behavior in the physical world and that the dignity, privacy, and rights of all staff, students, parents, and caregivers are protected.

1.7 Requires a shared responsibility amongst Principals and Managers, Teachers and Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians/Caregivers, and Executive Council.

2.0 Responsibilities

2.1 Principals and Managers

- 2.1.1 Develop expectations for the responsible use of digital technology with the participation and input of the school community (students, staff, and families) in alignment with the Code of Conduct.
- 2.1.2 Communicates responsible use of digital technology expectations to staff, students, and parent/guardian/caregivers annually (i.e., newsletter, website, school agenda, or code of conduct).
- 2.1.3 Provide students, staff, and parent/guardian/caregivers learning opportunities regarding responsible use of digital technology, digital citizenship, digital literacy, and privacy.
- 2.1.4 Model the responsible use of digital technology on both HWDSB-provisioned and personal electronic devices.

2.2 Teachers and Staff

- 2.2.1 Maintain classroom expectations for the responsible use of digital technology.
- 2.2.2 Ensure that student use of digital technology on both HWDSB-provisioned and personal electronic devices during instructional time is for educational purposes only, unless otherwise authorized.
- 2.2.3 Teach the importance of acting in appropriate ways in both digital and physical spaces and providing learning opportunities regarding responsible use of technology, digital citizenship, and digital literacy.

2.3 Students

- 2.3.1 Use digital technology and/or personal electronic devices as learning tools during instructional time, unless otherwise authorized to do so by a teacher or principal/vice principal.
- 2.3.2 Ensure their behavior in the digital world meets the same expectations as behavior in the physical world, using digital technology or personal electronic devices in a manner that respects the dignity, rights, and privacy of all.
- 2.3.3 Use digital technology and/or personal electronic devices outside of instructional time as directed by the Code of Conduct, as well as for health and medical purposes.
- 2.3.4 Project a positive identity online and participate and contribute constructively.

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- 2.3.5 Use a board username and a secure password when appropriate and limit the amount of personally identifying information shared online when possible.
- 2.3.6 Understand that they will be held accountable for content created using their account (log out of accounts on public/shared devices).
- 2.3.7 Refrain from inappropriate use, including but not limited to cyber bullying, viewing creating or distributing inappropriate, racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, transphobic, or ableist content, or participating in any other oppressive behaviour in digital spaces.

2.4 Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

- 2.4.1 Encourage their child(ren) to use digital technology and personal electronic devices as learning tools during instructional time.
- 2.4.2 Assist their child(ren) in understanding the importance of digital citizenship and privacy.
- 2.4.3 Explain the importance of acting in appropriate ways in both digital and physical spaces.

2.5 Executive Council

- 2.5.1 Work collaboratively with schools, departments, and school communities to:
 - Understand the importance of the responsible use of digital technology.
 - Develop school-specific guidelines for responsible use where appropriate.
 - Identify learning opportunities regarding digital citizenship for staff, students, and parent/guardians/caregivers.