

A. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Consistent with board policy 3225/7320, Acceptable Use Policy, the board of education encourages the use of the Internet as a means of providing accessible, accurate and timely information for staff, students, parents and others in the larger community to further the school district's objectives. The Internet lends the school district the opportunity to better communicate with its communities by posting pertinent district and school information on the web. The school district has established its district site on the web at www.wilkes.k12.nc.us. The school district website is the official website of the school district. In addition to this website, individual schools and departments may create school websites. This policy provides the standards that must be followed for development of all district-related websites. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the removal of a web page or website from the Internet.

A "district-related website" is any Internet website that is established in one of the following ways:

- By school district employees or students on behalf of the district;
- By any school within the district;
- By any school-sponsored club or organization within the district; or
- Through the use of school district equipment or the school district's access to the Internet.

Only those websites that are created pursuant to this policy are considered district-related websites. The board does not endorse and is not responsible for websites created by employees, students, or others outside the standards and guidelines of this policy. Students or employees who create personal websites that create a substantial and material disruption to the school environment may be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Standards for Web Page Development**1. Forums for Expression**

The purpose of district-related websites is to disseminate curriculum-related information, to present to the public with information about the district, its schools and programs and to provide the community with each school or department's mission, contact information, activities, organizational format and instructional program. District-related websites are analogous to newsletters from the administration or the individual school. District-related websites are not analogous to a student newspaper or non-school publication.

2. Administration and Editorial Control

All staff members responsible for creating, developing, maintaining, editing or approving a district-related website will behave legally, responsibly and ethically in providing educational resources

and information to support the mission and curriculum of the school district. Such persons will abide by the generally accepted rules of website etiquette, board policy and regulations established by the superintendent.

a. Superintendent Final Authority

The board delegates to the superintendent, administrative staff, [principals](#), teachers and web managers the authority to place information on district-related websites. The superintendent or his/her designee has final authority to approve or disapprove any information in whatever form on such websites.

b. School District Official Website

The superintendent or his/her designee will have editorial control and responsibility for the content of the school district official website. The superintendent will appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager/editor of the district website.

c. Individual School Websites

The school district will provide each school with a web address, web design software and disk space on the district server. Each [principal](#) will have editorial control and responsibility for the content of the individual school's official website, subject to review of the superintendent or his/her designee. The [principal](#) will appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager of the school's website and a website committee to advise the editor and [principal](#) regarding the content of the school's website. Individual school websites must comply with the additional guidelines provided below.

d. Teacher and Student Websites

Each teacher will have editorial control and responsibility for the content of his/her official website and for the content of his/her students' websites, subject to the review by the [principal](#), the superintendent and the board. Upon the knowledge and written consent of a student's parent or guardian, a teacher may allow a student to create a website within or linked from a school's or teacher's website only for the following instructional purposes; (1) to teach a student how to create or maintain a website or (2) to facilitate a student's work on school assignments or research projects.

e. Personal Websites

The school district is not responsible for personal websites or web pages created or maintained by students, personnel, parents, groups or organizations. Personal websites

or web pages are not considered district-related websites or web pages, and are not covered by the provisions of this policy.

All employees are required to use the Wilkes County Schools' district network when creating websites for any and all educational and work related positions or communications with students.

The superintendent may use any means available to request the removal of personal websites that substantially disrupt the school environment or that utilize school district or individual school names, logos or trademarks without permission.

Employees are to maintain an appropriate relationship with students at all times. Having a public personal website or online networking profile or allowing access to a private website or private online networking profile is considered a form of direct communications with students. Employees are encouraged to block students from viewing any material or profiles that are not age appropriate. Any employee found to have created and/or posted inappropriate content on a website or profile that has a negative impact on the employee's ability to perform their job as it relates to working with students will be subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal. This section applies to all employees, volunteers and student teachers working for or in the Wilkes County School System.

3. Website Appearance and Evaluation

Web page content will be kept current and maintained regularly. All district-related websites will be reviewed, proofed and evaluated regularly by the superintendent or his/her designee for the official district website or the [principal](#) or his/her designee for individual school websites.

4. Copyright Laws

Websites must comply with all copyright laws and board policy 3230/7330, Copyright Compliance. Copyright permission must be obtained for the use of any copyrighted material. The superintendent or designee and each [principal](#) or designee will ensure that all permission for use of copyrighted work or release of information is maintained in a safe place.

5. Links

a. Internal Links

All school websites will have a hyperlink to the school district official website.

b. External Links

The superintendent, [principals](#), web managers and teachers have editorial control and responsibility for the linking of a district-related website to other sites on the Internet that are appropriate to the mission of the school district. If required, web managers must obtain permission from external websites before links are established from any district-related website to external websites. To the extent possible, school personnel will determine the extent to which a secondary site is linked to other sites on the Internet and whether such sites are appropriate for access through the school district websites. Web managers will periodically check external links for accuracy and appropriateness of content. School personnel must report any inappropriate links to the web manager.

Since the school district cannot control the content of other sites on the Internet and their linkages, the following disclaimer statement will be inserted in a prominent position on the official district website:

Linked sites are not under the control of the school district, its agents or its employees. The school district is not responsible for the contents of any linked site, any link contained in a linked site or any changes or updates to such sites. The school district provides links as a convenience, and the inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement of the site by the school district. The school district reserves the right to remove or restrict any links to sites containing inappropriate, obscene, sexually explicit or other material that is inconsistent with the mission of the school district or outside the scope of permissible uses as articulated in board policy 3225/7320, Acceptable Use Policy.

c. Links to Personal Pages

Links to personal web pages of students or staff and lists of personal web pages will not be permitted on school websites or web pages.

6. Behavior Standards

When using the Internet, staff and students are responsible for understanding and complying with board policies and administrative regulations, including policy 3225/7320 (Acceptable Use Policy), the 4300 section policies (Student Behavior Policies) and the 7300 section policies (Staff Responsibility Policies).

7. Accessibility of Website

The web manager/editor, in consultation with the technology director, will ensure that the school district website meets required standards to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

C. GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL WEBSITES

Each of the schools may promote itself by publishing an official school web page on the Internet via the official school district website only. The primary purpose of publishing school web sites on the Internet or other electronic network system is to present curriculum-related work by students and staff members and to provide to the community each school's mission, organization, instructional program and activities.

In addition to the website standards provided above, the following standards apply to individual school websites:

1. The content of school web pages must be approved by the school principal. The principal or site director is responsible for all content on the web site.
2. The safety of students and staff must be considered when constructing school web pages. Precautions should be taken to protect the safety of students and staff including the following:
 - a. Home addresses or telephone numbers will not be listed;
 - b. Student e-mail addresses will not be listed;
 - c. Photographs of students and student work will be used only as approved for release as directory information under policy 4700, Student Records. The permission form will be filed in the student's cumulative record.
 - d. Students will be referred by first name and last initial only.

The principal will implement other safety precautions to be followed when constructing web pages.

3. Schools must provide contact information and other general information about the school on the school website, including the school name, principal, phone number, fax number, grade levels, and address.
4. Graphics used on school websites must be appropriate to the school and should be of a size that will download quickly into a web browser.

5. Schools must keep information presented on their school's web page current, accurate and grammatically correct.
6. Failure to comply with these guidelines or standards of this policy, as determined by the superintendent or his designee, may result in the removal of a school's web page from the Internet.

Legal References: U.S. Const. Amend. I; 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq.; Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; G.S. 115C-391, - 325(e)

Cross References: Curriculum and Instructional Guides (policy 3115), Technology in the Educational Program (policy 3220), Internet Acceptable Use (policy 3225/7320), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Code of Student Conduct (policy 4300), Student Records (policy 4700), Public Records (policy 5070), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Personnel Files (policy 7820)

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