

Palm Beach County Schools Weblogs Acceptable Use Policy

Governance

The use of classroom blogs is governed by existing District policies for acceptable use and for protecting student privacy.

The owner/publisher of the blog will be a classroom teacher or other full-time District employee. Blogs may not be created for students or for non-employees.

Employee use of blogs is governed by School Board Policy 3.29, Employee Use of Technology. <http://www.schoolboardpolicies.com/p/3.29.htm>

The following specific sections of the policy apply to teachers and their use of the classroom blogging system:

- The District authorizes employees to use District technology resources, applications, and databases for assigned responsibilities. (The classroom blog is an official District resource.)
- All employees who have access to or may have access to personally identifiable student records shall adhere to all standards included in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. (Student privacy must be maintained at all times.)
- Intranet and Internet Resources, telephones, and e-mail shall be used to enhance job productivity in performance of District business and shall not be used to send abusive, threatening, or harassing messages. (As the publisher of a blog ALL message that appear are considered to be the responsibility of the blog "owner".)
- Use of the Internet is similar to use of a school gym or library after school. Professionals are encouraged to use these facilities for personal and professional growth, which must not be confused with financial gain...Examples of "financial gain" include offering products or services for sale or soliciting for advertisers or sponsors for the benefit of any enterprise other than the District. (Advertising is not allowed on your classroom blog.)

Practical Considerations and Acceptable Use Provisions:

With the above policies in mind teachers must comply with the provisions listed below;

1. Teachers may modify the appearance of their blog by changing their themes and adding page elements (widgets). Teachers MAY NOT make changes to the settings for discussions established by the District. Violation of this term will lead to an immediate suspension of the blog. This includes comment moderation settings and other settings applied by District staff.

2. Anonymous comments and comments that have not be approved by the owner/publisher (teacher) are PROHIBITED. Modifying commenting rules or allowing inappropriate comments to appear will lead to an immediate suspension of their blog.
3. Messages appearing in comments will be treated as if the teacher themselves wrote the comment and are subject to the policies of the District. (If it appears in your blog you are considered the owner.)
4. All comments must be read and approved by the teacher. This setting is established by the District and may not be changed. Teachers are responsible for making necessary edits to student comments to preserve student privacy. (See next item.)
5. Students may not be identified by their full names at any time, including comments they post themselves. Students may be identified by first name and last initial only. (For example, Chris Henderson would be identified as Chris H.)
6. Where students post comments that may contain personal information beyond their name (e.g. address, phone number, e-mail address, etc.) teachers are responsible for editing or disapproving the comment.
7. Teachers are responsible for insuring that Form 1941 has been completed for each student whose photograph or writing samples appear in the classroom blog.
8. Teachers should *expect* students to attempt to post inappropriate comments (at least initially) and be prepared to deal with the infraction as they would a classroom disruption. Teachers should stress to students that they will read and approve every comment that is posted and that when/if a student posts something questionable the teacher will take the appropriate disciplinary action consistent with their classroom rules.
9. District staff will routinely monitor classroom blogs to insure the above policies are adhered to and that the blog is being used for instructional purposes.
10. Teachers are to review the above with their students prior to introducing the blog to their classroom. Student behavior is governed by the SDPBC Student Handbook and SDPBC Policy 8.123 and subject to disciplinary action if violated. This includes bullying and threatening comments, inappropriate comments, releasing private information of other students and other behaviors prohibited by existing policies.