# School Websites *Posting Information on Websites: Best Practices for Schools and Boards* (OIPCO, Upper Grand DSB, and Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board; *Key features of a safe school website* (BECTA)

**We have requests to put various forms of information on our school's website. Where do I draw the line?**

School websites serve to enhance communication but must be respectful on MFIPPA applications and safety. As well, the principal is responsible for the content of the school website. Any school creating a website should have a webmaster appointed by the principal. The webmaster should assist the principal in ensuring that these guidelines are adhered to and that the content of the school web pages meets the principal's approval. Here are several guidelines for developing school websites:

- For consistency, maintainability, URL management, site security, and other related issues, all organizations of the school board/authority, including schools must host their sites on the school board/authority web server.
- The content of the school website and associated links must be consistent with the educational aims of the school board/authority.
- School web pages should not contain any commercial or promotional advertising. School web pages may contain small acknowledgements of school partnerships or sponsorships, which are in accordance with the written approval of the Director.
- All school websites must contain a link back to the school board/authority home page. This link must be prominent and displayed on the school's main page.
- No school page content should provide the means for people to contact any student directly. If communication back to the school is needed, it should be directed to the appropriate staff member.
- Pictures of students included on school web pages must NOT include student names unless appropriate consent has been provided. Similarly, schools should not use filenames for pages and images which include student names. First names can be used for samples of student work.
- When using pictures of persons on the school website, the school must obtain written permission.
- Personal home pages for students or staff members are not permitted.
- School web pages must not use copyrighted materials without permission.
- The principal must be clearly identified on the main page with the principal's email address prominently displayed. All correspondence to the site should go to the school identified school website contact. Where a teacher has a curriculum project that requires email responses, the principal can authorize the listing of the teacher's email address and not receive copies of the responses.
- The date of the last update must be clearly identified on the main page.
- To encourage currency of school pages, it is recommended that each school web page on the school board/authority site be disabled if the date on the school main page is more than six months old and information is out of date. Schools should be contacted prior to disabling the page.
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**Principal's Best Practice:** Include your school's privacy policy on the website and describe it in your newsletter. Also, arrange for privacy and safety checks of the website to be included in a

list of duties related to the website. These checks should be performed by an individual i.e. a webmaster appointed by the principal who is knowledgeable in these areas, preferably staff.