

Consistent with policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use, and in an effort to further the school system's objectives, the board of education encourages the use of the Internet as a means of providing accessible, accurate, and timely information for employees, students, parents, and others in the larger community. The Internet affords the school system the opportunity to communicate with its communities by posting pertinent system and school information online. The school system has established its system website online at [www.elkin.k12.nc.us](http://www.elkin.k12.nc.us). The school system website is the official website of the school system. In addition to this website, individual schools and departments may create system-related school websites. This policy provides the standards that must be followed for development of all system-related websites. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the removal of a web page or website from the Internet.

**A. SYSTEM-RELATED WEBSITE**

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

1. by school system employees or students on behalf of the system;
2. by any school within the system;
3. by any school-sponsored club or organization within the system; or
4. by students as part of an educational assignment.

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

**B. STANDARDS FOR WEB PAGE DEVELOPMENT**

1. Non-Public or Closed Forums for Expression

All system-related websites are "non-public" or "closed" forums for expression. This means that the system has control over information on such websites and is not required to allow students, teachers, or others to place material on system-related websites. The purpose of system-related websites is to disseminate curriculum-related information; to present the public with information about the system, its schools, and its programs; and to provide the community with each school or department's mission, contact information, activities, organizational format, and instructional program. System-related websites are analogous to

newsletters from the administration or the individual school. System-related websites are not analogous to a student newspaper or a non-school publication.

2. Administration and Editorial Control

All employees responsible for creating, developing, maintaining, editing, or approving a system-related website shall act legally, responsibly, and ethically in providing educational resources and information to support the mission and curriculum of the school system. Such persons shall abide by the generally accepted rules of website etiquette, board policy, and regulations established by the superintendent.

a. Superintendent Final Authority

The superintendent, technology director or designee may delegate authority to place information on a system-related website; however, the superintendent has the final authority to disapprove any information in whatever form on any such system-related websites.

b. School System Official Website

The superintendent, technology director or designee has editorial control and responsibility for the content of the school system official website. The superintendent shall appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager/editor of the system website.

c. Individual School Websites

Each school will be provided with a web address, web design software, and disk space on the system server. All system-related websites will be housed on the system web server. Each principal has editorial control and responsibility for the content of his or her individual school's official website, subject to review of the superintendent, technology director, or designee. The principal may appoint a staff member to serve as the web manager of the school's website and a website committee to advise the web manager 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 has editorial control over and responsibility for the content of his or her official website and for the content of his or her students' authorized websites, subject to review by the principal, the superintendent, the technology director and the board. With 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. No student pages may be posted or made accessible to the general public until approved by the principal or designee.

e. Personal Websites

The school system is not responsible for personal websites or web pages created or maintained by students, employees, parents, groups, or organizations. Personal websites or web pages are not considered system-related websites or web pages and are not covered by the provisions of this policy. (For further information regarding personal websites, see policy 7335, Employee Use of Social Media)

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

3. Website Appearance and Evaluation

Web page content must be kept current and be maintained regularly. The superintendent, technology director, designee (for the official system website) or the principal or designee (for individual school websites) must regularly review, proof, and evaluate all system-related websites.

4. Copyright Laws

No information or graphics may be posted on websites in violation of any copyright laws or policy 3230/7330, Copyright Compliance. Copyright permission must be obtained for the use of any copyrighted material unless use is permitted as "fair use" under federal law. The superintendent or designee and each principal or designee is responsible for maintaining copies of permission granted for the use of copyrighted material.

5. Links

a. Internal Links

Each page of a system-related website must include a reference and hyperlink to the school system official website home page.

b. External Links

The superintendent technology director, and designee have editorial control over and responsibility for the linking of a system-related website to other sites on the Internet that are appropriate to the mission of the school system. Links to external sites (including externally hosted teacher classroom sites) must be approved by the principal. To the extent possible, school personnel shall 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 system websites. Web managers shall periodically check external links for accuracy and appropriateness of content. School employees must report any inappropriate links to the web manager and/or technology director.

Since the school system cannot control the content of other sites on the Internet and their linkages, the following disclaimer statement must be inserted in a prominent position on the official system website, on each school's web page.

*The school system retains control over what links will be placed on system-related websites; however, the linked sites themselves are not under the control of the school system, its agents, or its employees. The school system 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 system provides links as a convenience, and the inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement of the site by the school system. The school system reserves the right to remove or restrict any links.*

c. Links to Personal Pages

School websites or web pages may not contain links to personal web pages of students or employees or lists of personal web pages.

6. Behavior Standards

When using the Internet, employees and students are responsible for understanding and complying with board policies and administrative regulations, including policy 3225/4312/7320, Technology Responsible Use; student behavior policies in the 4300 series; and policy 7300, Staff Responsibilities.

7. Accessibility of Website

The web manager/editor, in consultation with the technology director, shall ensure that the school system website attempts to meet required standards to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities.

**C. GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL WEBSITES**

Each school may promote itself by publishing an official school web page on the Internet only via the official school system website. In addition to the standards above, the following standards apply to individual school websites.

1. The content of school web pages must be approved by the school principal.
2. The safety of students and employees must be considered when constructing school web pages. To protect the safety of students and employees, the following precautions must be taken:
  - 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 with appropriate parental permission and/or as approved for release as directory information under policy 4700, Student Records.

The principal or designee is responsible for maintaining records of permission denied for the release of information. The principal should implement other safety precautions, as necessary, to be followed when constructing web pages.

3. To protect a student's rights in his or her intellectual property, if a school or teacher publishes a student's work, a disclaimer should be provided indicating the terms of redistribution or reuse.
4. Schools must provide contact information and other general information about the school on the school website, including the school's name, phone number, fax number, grade levels, and address, the principal's name, and the e-mail addresses of a school administrator.
5. Graphics used on school websites must be appropriate to the school and should be of a size appropriate for faster downloads into a web browser.
6. Schools must keep information presented on their school's web page current, accurate, and grammatically correct.
7. The principal or designee must approve all revisions and additions to the school website.
8. Failure to comply with these guidelines or the standards of this policy, as determined by the superintendent, technology director, or designee, may result in the removal of a school's web page from the Internet.

Legal References: U.S. Const. Amend. I; Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. 2510-2522; Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g; 17 U.S.C. 101 *et seq.*; G.S. 115C-325(e) (applicable to career status teachers), -325.4 (applicable to non-career status teachers)

Cross References: Curriculum and Instructional Guides (policy 3115), Technology in the Educational Program (policy 3220), Technology Responsible Use (policy 3225/4312/7320), Copyright Compliance (policy 3230/7330), Student Behavior Policies (4300 series), Student Records (policy 4700), Public Records – Retention, Release, and Disposition (policy 5070/7350), Staff Responsibilities (policy 7300), Employee Use of Social Media (policy 7335), Personnel Files (policy 7820)

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