

Consistent with policy IIBG, “Technology Acceptable Use,” and in an effort to further the school district’s objectives, the Transylvania County Board of Education (the “Board”) encourages the use of the Internet as a means of providing accessible, accurate, and timely information for employees, students, parents, and other members of the broader community. The Internet provides the school district opportunities to communicate with internal and external stakeholders by publishing pertinent system and school information online.

The official website of Transylvania County Schools is available online at <http://www.tcsnc.org>. In addition to this system website, individual schools and departments may create system-related 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 established in one of the following ways:

- a. By school district employees or students on behalf of Transylvania County Schools;
- b. By any school within Transylvania County Schools;
- c. By any school-sponsored club or organization within Transylvania County Schools; or,
- d. By students of Transylvania County Schools as part of an educational assignment.

Only those websites created pursuant to this policy are considered system-related websites. The Board does not endorse, nor is it 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 Transylvania County Schools 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 purposes of system-related websites are to disseminate curriculum-related information; to present the public with information about the school district, 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 an 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 Transylvania County Schools. Such persons shall abide by generally accepted rules of website etiquette, applicable Board policies, and administrative procedures and regulations established by the Superintendent or designee.

a. Superintendent's Final Authority

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

b. The School District's Official Website

The Superintendent has editorial control and responsibility for the content of the school district's official website and shall appoint a designee to serve as the web manager of the school district's official website.

c. Individual School Websites

Each school will be provided a web address, web design software, and storage space for publication of website content. All system-related websites will be housed on servers or hosted by providers specifically approved for such purpose by the Superintendent or designee. 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 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 or designee, 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 web pages may be posted or made accessible to the general public until approved by the principal or designee.

e. Personal Websites

Transylvania County Schools 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 additional information regarding personal websites, please see policy IIBG, "Technology Acceptable Use.")

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 district or individual school names, logos, or trademarks without permission.

3. Website Appearance and Evaluation

Website content must be kept current and be maintained regularly. All system-related websites must include the name of the web page author, the date produced or revised, and the e-mail address of the author. The Superintendent or designee (for the school district's official 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 IIB, "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 web page of a system-related website must include a reference and hyperlink to the home page of the school district's official website. In addition, all system-related websites must include a link to this policy and to policy IIB, "Technology Acceptable Use."

b. External Links

The Superintendent 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 district. Links to external sites (including externally hosted teacher classroom sites) must be approved by the principal. If required, web managers must obtain permission from external websites before links are established from any system-related website to external websites. 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 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.

Since the school district cannot control the content of other sites on the Internet and their linkages, the following statement of disclaimer must be inserted in a prominent position on the school district's official website, on each school's official website, and on other system-related websites that contain links to other websites or web pages that are not system-related websites:

Transylvania County Schools retains control over what links will be placed on system-related websites; however, the linked sites themselves are not under the control of the Transylvania County Board of Education, 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 appearing on sites under its operation.

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 IIBG, "Technology Acceptable Use," and applicable student behavior policies outlined in Section J of the Board's official policy manual.

7. Accessibility of Website

The web manager, in consultation with the Superintendent or designee, shall ensure that the school district's official website meets 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 website on the Internet only via the school district's official website. In addition to the standards described above, the following standards also 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. Neither home addresses nor telephone numbers will be listed;
 - b. Student e-mail addresses will not be listed; and,
 - c. Photographs of students and student work may be published on school web pages unless a parent request for non-publication of those materials has been submitted to the principal. Publication of photographs and/or student work will include only the student's first name, with no other information about the student.

The principal or designee is responsible for maintaining records of permission granted 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 regarding his or her intellectual property, if a school or teacher publishes a student's work, then a disclaimer should be provided indicating that the work may not be copied or modified in any way.

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 the school administrative team.
5. 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.
6. Schools must keep information presented on their web pages 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 or designee, may result in the removal of a school's website or web pages 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.*; N. C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-325(e), -391

Cross References: Policy IIAB ("Copyright Compliance"); Policy IIBG ("Technology Acceptable Use"); Policy JO ("Confidentiality and Access to Student Records")

APPROVED BY BOARD
AND EFFECTIVE _____