

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS FOR BLOG USE WILLIAMSON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Overview

A blog is a website where entries are made in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order.

Blogs often provide commentary or news on a particular subject, such as food, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. Most blogs are primarily textual although some focus on photographs (photoblog), videos (vlog), or audio (podcasting), and are part of a wider network of social media.

The term "blog" is a contraction of "Web log." "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning *to maintain or add content to a blog*.

--Excerpt from Wikipedia, October 2006

Note: The procedures are universal in scope for both student and district employee. The word "user" will be employed to refer to anyone that has access to district computer technology.

Guidelines

The most basic guideline to remember when blogging is that the blog is an extension of the classroom. You should not write anything on a blog that you would not say or write in your classroom. Use common sense, but if you are ever in doubt ask a teacher or parent whether or not what you are considering posting is appropriate. Here are some specific items to consider:

1. The use of blogs is considered an extension of your classroom. Therefore, any speech that is considered inappropriate in the classroom is inappropriate on a blog. This includes, but is not limited to, profanity; racist, sexist or discriminatory remarks; personal attacks.
2. Blogs are used primarily as learning tools, either as extensions of conversations and thinking outside of regular class time, or as the basis for beginning new classroom discussions. Either way, be sure to follow all rules and suggestions that are offered by your teachers regarding appropriate posting in your class.
3. Blogs are about ideas – therefore, agree or disagree with the idea, not the person. Freedom of speech does not give you the right to be uncivil. Use constructive criticism and use evidence to support your position. Read others' posts carefully.

4. Try not to generalize. Sentences that start with words like “All” (e.g., “All teachers,” “All administrators,” “All liberals,” “All conservatives”) are typically going to be too general.
5. Blogs are public. Whatever you post on a blog can be read by *anyone and everyone* on the Internet. Even if you delete a post or comment, it has often already been archived elsewhere on the web. Do not post anything that you wouldn’t want your parents, your best friend, your worst enemy, or a future employer to read.
6. Blog safely. NEVER post personal information on the web (including, but not limited to, last names, personal details including address or phone numbers, or photographs). (Note: The advice to not use your last name is for your protection. Teachers may choose to use their last names for their posts/comments.)
7. Because your login to the blogging site (e.g., EduBlogs, Elgg) is typically linked to your profile, any personal blog you create in class is directly linked to your class blog and must follow these blogging guidelines. In addition to following the information above about not sharing too much personal information (in your profile or in any posts/comments you make), you need to realize that anywhere you use that login links back to your class blog. Therefore, **anywhere** that you use that login (posting to a separate personal blog, commenting on someone else’s blog, etc.), you need to treat the same as a school blog and follow these guidelines. You should also monitor any comments you receive on your personal blog and - if they are inappropriate - delete them. If you would like to post or comment somewhere and not follow these guidelines, you need to create a separate login to the blogging site so that it does not connect back to your class blog. You may **not** use that login from school computers. We would still recommend you follow the portion of these guidelines that address your personal safety (e.g., not posting personal information, etc.)
8. Linking to web sites from your blog or blog comments in support of your argument is an excellent idea. But never link to something without reading the entire article to make sure it is appropriate for a school setting.
9. Use of quotations in a blog is acceptable. Make sure that you follow the proper formatting and cite the source of the quote.
10. Pictures may be inserted into a blog. Make sure that the image is appropriate for use in a school document and copyright laws are followed. Do not post any images that can identify yourself or others.

Successful Blogging

The following are some traits of successful bloggers:

1. Their posts (or comments) are well written. This includes not only good content, but – because these are school-related blogs – also follows writing conventions including spelling, grammar and punctuation.
2. Their posts (or comments) are responsive. They respond to other people’s ideas – whether it is a post by a teacher, a comment by a student, or an idea elsewhere on

- the Internet. The power of blogs is in their connectedness – they are connected to a larger community of ideas. Participate in that community.
3. Their posts (or comments) include textual references to support their opinions. Adding quotes or links to other works strengthens their response.
 4. They participate frequently. To be part of the dialogue, you have to participate fully and consistently.
 5. They are respectful of others. It's okay to disagree; it's not okay to be disagreeable. Be respectful of others and their opinions, and be civil when you disagree.

Unacceptable Uses

In accordance with Williamson Central School's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), blog users must agree to abide by the rules for authorized student uses of the Internet. Unauthorized use of the Internet or any use that is not strictly in compliance with Williamson Central School Policy, Practices and Procedures, may result in the revocation, suspension, or modification of Internet privileges.

The following are unacceptable uses of school blogs:

1. Users will not use their school created blog account for anything outside of classroom use.
2. Users will not use obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language.
3. Users will not post information that could cause damage or a danger of disruption to the computer network.
4. Users will not engage in personal attacks, including those that are prejudicial or discriminatory.
5. Users will not harass another person. Harassment is persistently acting in a manner that distresses or annoys another person. If a user is told by a person to stop sending them messages, then the user must do so.
6. Users will not knowingly or recklessly post false or defamatory information about a person or an organization.
7. Users will not post private information about another person.
8. Users will not plagiarize works that they find on the Internet. Plagiarism is taking the ideas of writings of others and presenting them as if they were yours.
9. Users will respect the rights of copyright owners. Copyright infringement occurs when someone inappropriately reproduces a work that is protected by a copyright. If a work contains language that specifies appropriate use of that work, users should follow the expressed requirements. If users are unsure whether or not a work can be used, permission should be requested from the copyright owner. If in doubt about copyright status, consult with a teacher or library media specialist

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Student Section:

I agree to abide by the rules for authorized student uses of blogging and the Internet and understand that if I engage in any unauthorized use of blogging and/or the Internet or any use that is not strictly in compliance with Williamson Central School Policy, Practices and Procedures, my Internet privileges may be revoked, suspended, or modified. In addition, I understand that I may be subject to personal responsibility and liability, both civil and criminal, for any unauthorized, improper or illegal use of the Internet.

Student's Signature

Date

Student's Name (Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Section:

I have received and read a copy of the Blogging Administrative Regulations for Computer Use for the Williamson Central School District. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety. I will also instruct my child regarding any restrictions that we may have in addition to the District's restrictions set forth.

Parent's Signature

Date

Parent's Name (Please Print)

Home Address