



North Tonawanda City School District

Web Publishing

Best Practices for Teacher Pages

www.ntschoools.org

These guidelines contain tips and resources to keep teacher Web pages safe, user-friendly and in compliance with the North Tonawanda CSD Staff Technology Acceptable Use Regulations. Web pages published by teachers are written for and accessed by a wide range of audiences including parents, students, community members and other school staff. Following the guidelines will ensure the Web pages remain a valuable instructional tool and source of communication.

- **Content must be professional.**
Keep it related to curriculum and instruction. Three good things to start with are a welcome page, a calendar and a homework section. Solicitations or advertisements for the purpose of commercial or financial gain are prohibited.
- **Brevity is best.**
Keep Web copy short, clear and use spell check.
- **Remember the reader.**
Fonts. Fancy fonts are hard to read. Best to use: Arial, Courier, Georgia, Times New Roman, Verdana, or Trebuchet. The North Tonawanda site uses Verdana. Size 2 Bold for headlines, Size 2 for text.
Colors. Stick to black. Use color on a few words to emphasize something new or updated, but do not use colored text on an entire page. It's hard to read.
- **Be Professional.**
Your Web page represents the school district. Anyone can access these pages, even the press. It is important you present yourself on the Web the same way you would like the news to present you on TV (the same goes for pictures).
- **Use spell check.**
- **Keep it current.**
If you are still creating a page, turn it off. Wait until it is complete to share with everyone. If it is a page that does not reflect what is currently happening in your classroom, turn it off until next year. Get in the habit of setting start and stop dates (built in to School Wires Teacher Pages).
- **Be Safe.**
When listing a field trip on the Web, do not provide exact times or locations. It is better to communicate that information in a parent letter. Do not post personal information about yourself or about your students.
- **Turn attachments into PDFs (*with the exception of instructional templates*)**
It is recommended that you turn all Word, Excel, etc. documents into PDF files before posting them to the Web so they cannot be manipulated and changed.
- **Images**
 - ▶ The wrong image can send the wrong message, crash the server or even break the law. Choose images that compliment your site and are appropriate to the message.
 - ▶ Avoid large or multiple graphics and animations. Avoid extensive files with tiled backgrounds.
 - ▶ Only royalty free, non-copyrighted images are allowed. Sites for free clip art:
www.pics4learning.com
www.teacherfiles.com
www.backgroundcity.com

- **Use of Student Creative Work.**

North Tonawanda CSD has a Consent Form and Release regarding the use of a student's identification, likeness, voice or creative work in school publications, the Internet or on an educational CD, or any other print, electronic or digital media. You must verify that you have specific parent approval to use a creative work on the Web. Contact your school principal to verify that a completed release form is on file. Student work cannot be identified by the student's name. You can identify the class or unit theme.

No Student Names or Individual Photos on Teacher Web Pages.

The purpose of the teacher web pages is to provide instructional/curriculum based information for students and parents.

Use of Other Identifying Information - FERPA – Family Rights and Privacy Act.

North Tonawanda CSD has an opt out policy regarding the use of certain student information such as full name, name of parents or legal guardians, grade level, participation in officially recognized sports or activities, relevant statistics and personal data of members of athletic teams, achievements, awards and honors received. That means that unless the District has written documentation from the parent (or student if over 18 years of age) requesting not to release their student's information, we have permission to do so. **You must still verify that a student is not on the Opt Out list.** Check with your building's main office for the most current list. If you are not sure – don't post!

Even so – you still cannot use a child's name/photo on your teacher page.

Beware of how you name a file

When uploading a file containing student's work, please make certain the file name does not list students' names (ex.: SallyMae.jpg). If it does, please re-save it using another generic description to then upload onto the Web. Students' names could be inadvertently shared, accessed as part of the image's code, if not corrected.

- **Linking**

Links should be functioning, appropriate and current.

Web sites frequently change. Check any links you may post from your site regularly to be sure they are still functioning and current.

Use caution when linking to an outside Web page.

You can't censor material from other Web sites so be sure the site you link on your Web page is in compliance with the North Tonawanda CSD Web Publishing Regulations and Staff Technology Acceptable Use Regulation.

Disclaim, disclaim, disclaim!

When you link to a non-district Web site, you need to type the disclaimer somewhere on the page: "The links on this Web site are provided for your information and convenience. By clicking on a link, you will be leaving the district Web site. Please be aware that, while we make every effort to evaluate all the sites to which we link, we cannot endorse nor be responsible for the content provided on these sites."

Don't link to Web pages that are not complete or to chat rooms and personal Web sites.

Links to social media sites are prohibited.

- **Abide by Copyright Laws.**

By law you cannot use Copyrighted materials without the owner's permission. The Web is considered being Published or Public.

How Do I know if I've Broken Copyright Laws?

- You've broken copyright laws if you copy more than a few sentences from an article from another site and paste it onto your page (even if it is sourced). The same goes for photos, videos, images, etc... Better way -- write an introduction and link to the content you like, inserting a "link disclaimer" explained earlier in this document.

- You've broken copyright if you "right click" and "copy & paste" any photo, cartoon, image (chart/graphic) or video you like and drop it into your Web site.
- You've broken copyright if you scan something from a book and put it on your Web page.
- You've broken copyright if you use an outside organization's logo, like SkillsUSA. You must ask their permission to use their logo regardless. Get it in writing. Save it in a printed form.
- You've broken copyright if you post handouts created by someone else without their permission. Even if it says "okay for classroom reproduction" – the Web is not the classroom.
- You've broken copyright if your link to an outside site displays within the North Tonawanda CSD Web site. Instead, links must open in a new window.
- You've broken copyright if you display student work without the parent's and student's permission, via the North Tonawanda CSD Consent Form and Release. Student work is copyrighted to them.

Copyright "Okay to use":

- Links with a disclaimer note.
- A sentence or two from another Web page only if the reference is cited and the Web address to the source's main page is provided.
- Photos you have taken or have been given permission to use from the photographer. Get permission in writing.
- Graphs, charts and cartoons you have created.
- Royalty free, non-copyrighted images.
- Student work with permission from the parent and the student. (If 18 yrs. old only the student okay is needed)
- Directly purchased material that specifically gives you the license to use on the Web for that one time. (i.e.: "Royalty Free" music & photos purchased by you and for you. You are responsible for and must adhere to your licensing agreement with the company, such as listing them as a source if that is in your contract.)

Podcasts (non streamed webcast), WIKIS and Vodcasts (digital media streamed):

While technology in the classroom is ever-changing, the laws (such as Copyright, FERPA and Freedom of Speech) still apply. When you are dealing with the World Wide Web you could be broadcasting your mistakes to someone in China as well as an attorney. Here are some reminders.

- Copyright laws still apply.
- Student approvals for student work still apply. Photos of students are not allowed.
- The lesson must be relative to the classroom curriculum.
- Initiate a specific topic/question to keep student responses on task.

It may be helpful to send a letter home explaining access to pages and the "classroom rules".