

Guidelines on Professional Boundaries for Online Schooling



CANADIAN CENTRE for CHILD PROTECTION®
Helping families. Protecting children.

During this unprecedented time, classrooms have moved online so students can continue their schooling from home. Dedicated school staff have responded swiftly to meet the needs of students and families. Schools play a pivotal role within communities to offer structure and support through difficult times. Online classrooms come with new considerations and learning for everyone. An important one being, best practices for how teachers can maintain professionalism under the same rigor as within the classroom at school. To provide a standard of measure on best practices, the [Canadian Centre for Child Protection](#) has developed guidelines to help establish professional boundaries for online schooling.

Suggested Best Practices:

- Apply professional standards to all online interactions with students and parents.
- Maintain professional boundaries by communicating with students and parents during appropriate times of day and through established and authorized school platforms (as opposed to using personal accounts).
- Keep communication goal-oriented and tied to lesson outcomes.
- Keep all forms of communication transparent by including parents on all correspondence.
- Follow your school's privacy policies if posting any student work, digital pictures or other identifying information on social media or websites.
- Set appropriate restrictions to maximize your privacy on your personal social media accounts, ensuring that students cannot view or post content.
- Refrain from sending or accepting friend requests from students or liking content in students' personal social media accounts.
- Ensure transparency during video chat discussions with students. While chatting, all parties should be located in common/high traffic household areas (bedrooms/bathrooms are off limits). Proper clothing attire should also be worn.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Would a reasonable observer consider my interaction with students and parents as reasonable and professional?

Examples of inappropriate electronic communication include:

- Intimate or personal texting with students.
- Sexualized exchanges (communication, pictures, etc.) with students.
- Using informal and unprofessional language, such as profanity with students.
- Criticizing students, parents or colleagues.
- Posting or forwarding content, links or comments that might be considered inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or inconsistent with professional or ethical standards.
- Communicating with students through personal social media accounts or apps.

If you have any concerns about a child online, report to [Cybertip.ca](#)

The above are general guidelines and are not intended as a replacement for legal advice.

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