RATIONALE:

Identity

The internet provides us with the ability to change how we are perceived by others.
We can use photos, interests, and "favorites" lists, along with other content, to emphasize—or hide—different aspects of our identities. Individuals can engage in "identity play"—in which they explore and receive feedback on new identities (for example, a more confident self), or develop facets of the self (sexual or gender identities, for example) that they may not feel comfortable exploring offline.

Schools, Departments, Teams, Clubs and Classrooms (among other groupings that exist within a board setting) have the ability to create online identities representative of the interests, message, vision, or values of that group.

Credibility

Our credibility both online and offline, is directly tied to our identity. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness of people and of information. Credible people are accurate and authentic in how they present themselves, especially their credentials, skills, and motivations.

The volume of information available online creates both opportunities and risks—for learning, for making informed choices, and for connecting with other people. On the opportunities side, anyone can contribute information to knowledge communities (i.e. Wikipedia). On the risks side, it is relatively easy to post misinformation in online spaces, to misrepresent one's credentials and expertise online, or to take undue credit for the work of others (See: Authorship and Ownership Procedure). Certain properties of the Internet make it difficult to assess whether information and people can be trusted (i.e. the absence of cues (such as tone and facial expression).

Participation

Online spaces provide people with positive opportunities to assume new roles, obtain needed support, learn new skills, and collaborate with others. At the same time, opportunities to participate in harmful or counterproductive ways abound online, such as through hate speech, griefing, trolling, cyberbullying, and other forms of misconduct that can harm both individuals and whole communities.

While participating in online spaces, we must also be aware of the challenges new media environments place on traditional notions of privacy. Online social networks, forums, and blogs provide rich opportunities to network, communicate, and share information with vast audiences. There are both promises and risks associated with these opportunities. By creating a profile and sharing at least some personal information online, a person can participate in small, private online communities or large, public networks.

Disclosing information online can be harmful if users fail to consider the ways in which the information they share about themselves and others could be used. Given these properties, the everyday decisions people make regarding what to disclose, to whom, and how, become urgently important. All members of HWDSB need to be in the habit of reflecting on the potential consequences, for themselves and for others, of such decisions.

TERMINOLOGY:

Participation: Your participation online includes any and all accounts, personas, publications, and content (Status Updates, Texts, Blog Posts, Videos, Assignments, Forum Discussions et al.) created and/or shared in digital spaces. Participation online can include contributing in discussion forums, completing an online survey, signing an online petition, commenting on status updates on social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, HWDSB Commons), uploading an original video (ie. YouTube), or using other digital learning spaces (blog, wiki, etc.)

Identity: The profiles you create and the contributions you make in these spaces (your digital footprint) form your identity.

Credibility: Your credibility online is established through the content mentioned above.
The nature of online contributions extends the reach and impact of content beyond the regular school/business day. With this in mind, it is important to note that any contributions that negatively affect the school or workplace climate fall within the confines of this procedure.

PROCEDURES:

1.0   Standards of Behaviour

1.1   Online identities should adhere to the values of HWDSB, and contribute to the safe and caring environment we foster within our organization.

1.2   Responsibly assess the credibility of other people; evaluate information sources.

1.3   Recognize that other existing policies apply in digital circumstances (Equity Policy, Safe Schools Policy, Code of Conduct, Respectful working and learning environment).

1.4   Establish and use your own username and password and keep it secure (log out of accounts on public/shared devices).

1.5   Do not share your username with others: you will be held accountable for the content created.

Identity, Credibility and Positive Participation Procedure

1.6 Participate and contribute in positive ways in online spaces, knowledge communities, resource repositories, social networks (e.g.: Facebook, Twitter), social media sharing sites (e.g.: YouTube, Flickr, Instagram).

1.7 Recognize that regardless of your role within the board (Student, Teacher, School Board Office, Executive Council, and Trustee etc.) your online contributions could be perceived as representing HWDSB.

1.8 Recognize that the online contributions you make today will create a permanent record that will positively or negatively affect your identity and credibility, and may have an impact in the future.

1.9 The content of devices and accounts utilized for working and learning together in HWDSB should adhere to the Code of Conduct (Policy 6.3).

1.10 Do not impersonate others, or intentionally misrepresent their opinions or statements

2.0 Roles/Responsibilities

2.1 Principals
- Principals will hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful/responsible behaviour and will take a daily leadership role in the school by:
  o Monitoring behaviour, and holding everyone under their authority accountable for their behaviour and actions;
  o Empowering students to be positive leaders in digital spaces;
  o Modeling respect, responsibility, and civility online (digital citizenship), and ensuring these are taught as part of the curriculum;
  o Encouraging the use of current and relevant technologies.

2.2 Teachers and Staff:
- Teachers and staff will hold everyone to the highest standard or respectful/ responsible behaviour by:
  o Modelling respect, responsibility, and civility online, and empowering students to be positive leaders in digital spaces
  o Practicing self-regulation, and holding students accountable for their behaviour and actions;
  o encouraging the use of current and relevant technologies to blend learning in the classroom, and to create efficiencies in the workplace

Identity, Credibility and Positive Participation Procedure

2.3   Students:
- Students show respect and responsibility by:
  - o Demonstrating responsibility for actions or behaviour off school property or outside of the school day including online behaviour that would have an impact on the school climate;
  - o Accurately representing themselves while participating online and demonstrating appropriate online etiquette
  - o Practising self-regulation, holding peers accountable for their behaviour and actions, and being mindful of the well-being of others, reporting instances of troubling online activity (i.e., Bullying, Hate-speech, Depression, Self-harm)

2.4   Parents/Guardians:
- Parents/Guardians support a safe and respectful learning environment by:
  - o Modelling respect, responsibility, and civility online (digital citizenship)
  - o Being an active positive participant in the online community; and
  - o Encouraging respectful and appropriate online behaviour.

2.5   Trustees and Executive Council:
- Trustees and Executive Council members will model behaviour consistent with the Code of Conduct and character attributes of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.