HWDSB

POLICY: MODERN LEARNING

PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to preparing its students for success in an ever-changing economy and society by creating modern learning environments, both physical and digital, where students acquire and develop transferable skills.

HWDSB believes all students and employees should have equitable access to learning opportunities and modern learning environments that are engaging, authentic, relevant, and connected to local and global issues. Through these opportunities, students and educators will use transferable skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, to contribute to a more just society by examining and challenging systemic oppression and colonialism. Transferable skills also enable students to create innovative solutions to current and future social, economic, and environmental challenges.

HWDSB supports modern learning environments by provisioning digital devices to classrooms and students, and by promoting the ethical, competent and responsible use of digital tools, applications and platforms.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB invests in:

- Creating modern learning environments (both physical and digital) that are learner-centered and affirm and honour students' identities, voice and lived experiences.

- Providing opportunities for students and educators to acquire and develop transferable skills (Critical Thinking and Problem-solving, Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship, Self-Directed Learning, Collaboration, Communication, Global Citizenship and Sustainability, and Digital Literacy) through a variety of teaching approaches (e.g., co-operative learning, direct instruction, experiential learning, inquiry, problem-based learning).

- Provisioning classrooms with digital devices, digital platforms, and other learning resources that create opportunities for students and educators to acquire and develop digital skills, including how to use artificial intelligence (AI).

- Developing literacy and numeracy skills that are fundamental to student success.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Ensure all students have access to modern learning environments where they can acquire and develop transferable skills.

- Foster the development of transferable skills.

- Foster the development of digital skills and literacy needed for the responsible and effective use of digital tools, applications, and platforms to enhance student and educator learning.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council

TERMINOLOGY:

Artificial Intelligence: The development of computer systems, algorithms, or software that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks may include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, language understanding, and decision-making. AI systems often use techniques like machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing to process large amounts of data, identify patterns, and adapt to new information in order to achieve their goals. AI applications can be found in various fields, such as computer vision, robotics, medical diagnosis, finance, and virtual assistants, among others (created by the AI tool Chat GPT 4).

Authorship: The process of creating original work. To varying degrees, all creative work builds upon the previous work of others. Authors/creators sample and remix media content to create alternative interpretations of the ideas/themes/aesthetic qualities exemplified in source material. Citing source material is an important part of the creative process.

Blended Learning: A learning approach where digital learning resources are used in an in-person learning setting, or in which students are taught part of the time in person in the school environment and part of the time online.

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.

Digital Citizenship: The ideal of positive citizenship applied to the digital world. Being a good digital citizen or demonstrating digital citizenship includes interacting with others in a respectful, safe, accepting, and inclusive way; conducting oneself according to the norms and expectations of the community; representing oneself in a positive manner; encouraging others to be responsible digital citizens.

Identity: The profiles you create and the contributions you make in online spaces. Also, how a person defines themselves based on their self-perception and lived experiences.

Ownership: Includes works that belong to the public domain and individuals holding the legal rights to creative work. The author/creator is the first owner of copyright in a work. Where permission to use copyrighted material is needed, it is only the author/creator who can allow usage. However, when considering ownership of creative work, the Fair Use Doctrine tries to balance the protection of a copyright owner's ownership and users' rights to access information and creative works.

Fair Use Doctrine: A set of guidelines which will allow limited use of copyrighted materials without having to pay for use or ask permission for use.

Privacy: The protection of personal, private, and confidential information.

Transferable Skills:
- Critical Thinking and Problem-solving: Critical thinking and problem solving involve locating, processing, analyzing and interpreting relevant and reliable information to address complex issues and problems, making informed judgements and decisions and taking effective action.

- Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship: Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship support the ability to turn ideas into action in order to meet the needs of a community. These skills include the capacity to develop concepts, ideas or products for the purpose of contributing innovative solutions to economic, social and environmental problems.

- Self-Directed Learning: Self-directed learning involves becoming aware of and managing one's own process of learning. It includes developing dispositions that support motivation, self-regulation, perseverance, adaptability and resilience.

- Collaboration: Collaboration involves the interplay of the cognitive (thinking and reasoning), interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies needed to work with others effectively and ethically.

- Communication: Communication involves receiving and expressing meaning (e.g., through reading and writing, viewing and creating, listening and speaking) in different contexts and with different audiences and purposes.

- Global Citizenship and Sustainability: Global citizenship and sustainability involves understanding diverse world views and perspectives in order to effectively address the various political, environmental, social and economic issues that are central to living sustainably in today's interconnected and interdependent world.

- Digital Literacy: Digital literacy involves the ability to solve problems using technology in a safe, legal and ethically responsible manner.

(Adapted from Ministry of Education, Program Planning - Transferable Skills)

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Develop and implement on-going professional learning for educators that enables them to develop their own transferable skills and to create student learning experiences that develop transferable skills.

- Communicate the Board's guidelines for responsible use of digital tools in digital environments to students, parents/guardians/caregivers annually.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Ensure all students have access to modern learning environments where they can acquire and develop transferable skills.	Board wide standards for modern learning environments outlined in the HWDSB Modern Learning Strategy (Learning for Tomorrow) Digital device deployment
Foster the development of transferable skills.	Periodic review of student work across grades.
Foster the development of the digital skills needed for the responsible and effective use of digital tools, applications, and platforms to enhance student and educator learning.	Periodic review of student work across grades. eLearning enrollment and credit attainment

REFERENCES:

Government Documents
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Education Act
Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools, 2010
Learning for All
Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Ontario College of Teachers: Professional Advisory – Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media
Ontario Curriculum
Ontario Human Rights Code
International Society for Technology in Education; NETS - the National Education Technology Standards
Policy and Program Memorandum 164: Requirements for Remote Learning
Policy and Program Memorandum 167: Online learning graduation requirement

Revision 2025 – Template Migration