

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

<b>SUBJECT:      Use of Online Educational Tools</b>
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There are many types of online tools and applications that educators might use to support learning in the classroom. These tools might be used for a variety of purposes such as assessment or for subject-specific instruction and collaboration. The use of these tools must be carefully considered by each educator prior to implementation to protect students' personal information.

The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) sets out the legislation that school boards must adhere to for the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information. The definition of personal information is very broad and includes any information on its own, or as an aggregate, that can identify an individual and / or contains information about them. Personally Identifiable Information (PII) includes, but may not be limited to, a student's first and last name, photo, date of birth, address, phone number, email address, student identification number, school name and grade, assessment notes and personal health information.

**Staff Responsibilities**

All LKDSB employees must ensure that personal information is adequately protected at all times. The collection of personal information should be limited, collected for a specific purpose, and retained for only as long as it is needed.

The use of online tools must therefore be considered carefully to ensure that student personal information is protected as legislated under MFIPAA. Any online educational tool should be thoroughly assessed prior to use, as many do not guarantee the protection of personal information and do not meet MFIPPA standards.

**Online Tool Assessment**

The LKDSB has reviewed a large number of online tools for their use of private information, online safety, security, and for their contractual terms.

The LKDSB has used the services of the Educational Computing Network of Ontario (ECNO) Vetting Applications for Security and Privacy (VASP) services. These VASP assessments are conducted by experts in their relative field and are used Province-wide by school boards.

The assessments are given a score, with anything above 100 considered unsuitable for K-12 educational use in Ontario. The lower the score, the safer the tool.

The ECNO VASP team produces an educator report for each of their assessed applications. These reports are useful to staff to further mitigate any privacy or security risks. Prior to using an assessed application, staff must review the reports on the application and follow the advice given. If this conflicts with your current processes, you must let your Principal/ Supervisor know.

Some tools have been thoroughly vetted and are centrally provided and configured, including Microsoft Office, Google Apps for Education, D2L/Brightspace, MyBlueprint, Seesaw, Adobe Creative Suite, and Knowledgehook. These applications can be considered safe even though they require a student login. Tools that require no student PII are generally also considered safe, as are those where anonymized log-ins can be used.

The LKDSB has produced an online Catalogue that details all of the tools that have been assessed and their score, tools that contain no PII or are otherwise considered safe, and those yet to be determined. The tools are broken down by panel: Elementary, Secondary and Student Support Services and Well-Being, as some are used in multiple grades.

Tools have been categorized into a traffic light system:

- Red. Unsuitable for use.
- Yellow. Use with caution.
- Green. Suitable for use.
- White. To Be Determined (TBD). Tools that the Board recognizes are in use, but have yet to be assessed, or that little information has been provided about them.

Where a tool has been categorized as red, the LKDSB has strived to provide an alternative recommended tool. The LKDSB recognizes that for some, transitioning to a different tool may take some time. Staff must transition away from red tools as soon as possible, but no later than September 1, 2025.

Although the use of Red tools is strongly discouraged, some Red tools can be used safely by using mitigating measures. Advice on this is included in the LKDSB online tool list 'Notes For Use' column.

Some tools are considered Yellow or Green assuming that only a staff member is using a named account. Staff must refrain from using these tools with student accounts otherwise the risk level may increase.

Some other tools are either legacy / out of date, or duplicates to those recommended by the relevant Program department. The alternative tool is listed in the online tool list, and again it is expected that staff with transition no later than September 1, 2025.

Staff should view the list, LKDSB Notes for Use, and ECNO reports prior to using any online tool, even if the tool is listed as Green.

### **Use of the Online Tool Catalogue**

Prior to using any online educational tool, staff must:

- Navigate to the Online Educational Tool Catalogue in the Staff Portal
- Check to see whether the tool you wish to use is listed.
- If it's green – you may use it immediately.
- If it's yellow – review any associated notes, and the ECNO VASP assessment, prior to use to mitigate risks.
- If it is in the 'To Be Determined' list, you may use until it is formally assessed, but always be mindful of any privacy aspects.

If the tool is not listed, complete the Online Educational Tool Application Form (Appendix A) and submit to your Principal. **If the tool requires any student login or PII do not use it until you receive a response.**

Once the application has been submitted, Principals must review the request with the teacher to ensure the tool is necessary in their school, and that no approved alternatives exist. If the Principal approves the application, the next steps are:

- Principal e-mails the approved form to their Program Department Contact.
- Program Department checks that no recommended alternatives exist, and that the application is suitable for the subject, grades and curriculum expectations.
- Program Department checks with IT whether there has been a VASP assessment conducted:
  - If there is a VASP assessment below 100, the tool will generally be approved and added to the list.
  - If the VASP assessment is above 100, the tool will generally not be approved.
    - An acceptable alternative will be recommended, or
    - Acceptable mitigation measures proposed for its use (e.g. anonymizing log ins).
  - If there is no VASP assessment, then a VASP application request will be submitted.
  - If there is no VASP assessment and the priority is high, the LKDSB IT Department will conduct an interim assessment while the tool is in the ECNO VASP assessment process.

Parental Permission

If a tool is considered Yellow or Green and listed, staff no longer need to obtain parental approval. It is considered that by assessing the tool for its educational use, the Board has centrally approved the tool for use (so long as it is used per the VASP assessment recommendations).

Implementation Date: May 31, 2024