
Leon County Schools

Teacher Website Guidelines

Introduction

A classroom website is intended to communicate class and school-related information to parents, students and the community-at-large. While the website should be attractive and interesting, its main purpose is that of communication. Therefore, it must be easy to navigate and contain up-to-date information. The goal of every site is the effective communication of an intended message.

These guidelines provide suggestions for developers of web based content for sites hosted within LCS. Guidelines are required in the construction of school web pages to ensure that information on the pages is appropriate for any Internet user from around the world to access.

Employees of LCS School District are invited to create web sites to publish on the Internet. These web sites must reflect the professional image of LCS District, its employees and students. The purpose of the web site is to:

- Educate: Content provided in the web site should be usable by students, teachers and parents to support the curriculum. It will introduce visitors to your class and programs.
- Inform: Content may inform the community about the school, teachers, students, or departments, including information about curriculum, events, class projects, student activities and departmental policies. The site will link to valuable academic resources.
- Communicate: Content may provide an avenue to communicate and share successes with the community.

Responsibilities

- Teachers posting to the district-based web server are responsible for meeting the guidelines in this document. These guidelines cover management of content and technical standards of teacher web pages.
- Teachers must ensure that all links are functional, up-to-date and linked correctly to their school/site pages.
- The teacher is the only person authorized to upload files to the server. The teacher is solely responsible for the content of the web site.
- Do not share your username and password with students or parents.
- It is the responsibility of the school staff member to obtain the training necessary for creating, troubleshooting and maintaining web pages. Training is available from LCS.

Purpose

A well-designed class Web page can serve a variety of purposes. These purposes include:

- Providing a general description of the classroom or course.
- Providing a general outline and timeline of the units covered.
- Providing specific information about individual units or projects.
- Providing information about the progress of individual students.
- Providing links to online academic resources.

Questions for web page development

What factors should be taken into consideration before beginning:

- What information (and benefits) will your website provide to students and parents?
- Is there a clear understanding of the goals of the website?
- What is the intended audience and best design for that audience?
- A classroom website should convey something about the class and the teacher. What will your website convey?
- How often will you update the website? If updates will be infrequent, do not include time-sensitive items like assignments and calendars.
- Is there a plan for simple navigation? Can users find what they need?
- How will you link each page of the website back to the index (home) page or make it easy to navigate to your home page?

What could a class website include?

Contact information

- School information
- Staff email address
- Phone numbers
- Contact preference and hours
- How to set up a parent conference
- Dates & times of availability

Classroom information

- Syllabus
- Schedules
- Calendars
- Academic expectations
- Conduct code
- Class assignments
- Homework Assignments
- Project/Activity Guides
- Attachments (Handouts)
- Grading policy
- Archive of documents, files, etc.

News and events

- Upcoming events
- Newsletters
- Parent notification and forms

Links

- Online resources for students
- Resources for parents
- Activities for students
- Lesson ideas for other teachers
- Academic resources
- Online grade book
- Your school website
- District website

Student work

- Student projects
- Photographs of projects
- Student art work
- Digital media
- Links to Assessment sites

Web Site Content Guidelines

These guidelines will apply to all web pages on LCS District servers, whether created by schools, departments, district staff, students or other persons.

First Page of the Site

The first page of the web site must:

- Include the teacher or class name.
- Provide an e-mail address and phone number to contact the person responsible for the site (LCS staff email only).
- Contain a link to the school web site.

Disclaimer

The following disclaimer should be used on your web site to advise the user that once they leave school district pages they may encounter inappropriate material: *“Once you leave (the school name) web site and the district server. The LCS School District has no responsibility for the content beyond this point.”*

Keep Your Web Site Current

- Pages should be checked regularly to ensure that links are working and meet district standards. Check to make sure all internal and external links work properly.
- Remove expired date-related items.
- Maintain your files, remove unneeded files
- Test all pages thoroughly.
- Provide a date for the last update.

Grammar and Spelling

- All pages should be grammatically correct.
- All words should be spelled correctly.
- When acronyms are used, the meaning must be spelled out the first time it is used. Do not assume the reader knows any acronyms (AR, ESE, etc.).

Copyrights

- All web site authors must follow all applicable and existing copyright laws and intellectual property rights laws pertaining to the use of text, images, and sounds.
- Websites must comply with all state, federal, and international laws concerning legal uses of network computers.
- Websites must include a statement of copyright when appropriate and indicate that permission has been secured when including copyrighted materials.

- Never use text or graphics from another author's Internet pages unless the author explicitly states it may be freely copied or if appropriate arrangements are made with the author.
- When copying or paraphrasing information from an Internet page, always make an attribution to the page and author. If it is critical that a reader sees precise information available on a specific page, consider making a link to the page.

Use of Student Names, Pictures, Original Work, and Email Addresses

Great care should be exercised in the use of photographs of students, names of students and displaying original work of students on websites. Each teacher website will use the following guidelines for publications that require personal consent and/or permissions:

- Teacher websites may not place student names, pictures, or samples of student work (including written papers or samples of artistic expression), contact information (mailing address, phone number, or e-mail address), or biographical information on a website without the express written permission (LCS Acceptable Use Form) of the student's parent or guardian.
- Written parental or guardian approval is required before student photographs may be published on LCS websites. LCS provides a form for this purpose for every student. Photo captions shall not identify students' full name or any other personally identifiable information.
- Individual students may have personal pages on school websites, but only with a supervising teacher's approval and direct supervision.
- Student submissions on teacher websites or project pages (videos, blogs, rss, podcasts, and/or discussion boards online, etc.) must be supervised and reviewed. The teacher is responsible for maintaining the content: no foul language, offensive content, or derogatory comments concerning race, creed or ethnicity.
- Personally identifiable or confidential information shall not be published on a publicly accessible website.
- Any e-mail address links, survey-response links, or other direct-response content may be made to LCS staff email addresses only; not student e-mail addresses.
- As websites are not secure, no student attendance, grades or discipline may be posted. However, if a school is using a parent portal or other online academic system, a link to it may be posted.

Linking to other sites

- All pages and links, including non-LCS links, shall be curriculum related, instructional or school-oriented and appropriate to educational purposes. (LCS policies: 8.01, 8.05, 8.06 and procedures: D-6, F-16).
- Some inappropriate link examples may include, but are not limited to references and/or links to commercial, political, social, religious or philosophical sites.
- Meaningful terms should be used for all hyperlinks.
- No links to student or staff social networking/ personal web sites outside of LCS servers are allowed on a school's web site.

- Pages should be checked regularly to ensure that all tabs and links connect to active content.
- Websites cannot be used for any commercial purposes. A website cannot be used to promote financial gain, including advertisement of any services or materials for sale. Teacher web pages may not contain advertisements with these exceptions:
 - LCS approved sites.
 - LCS business partners and other individuals or organizations that contribute (financially or otherwise) to the school or district may be recognized with an appropriate statement on LCS websites but should not include an active link to the website.
 - Commercial designers of websites may be identified on the home page. The identification may include the designer's name and e-mail address but should not include an active link to the designer's website.
 - Non-profit organizations and/or community partners, approved by the district.

Technical Guidelines

In the interest of maintaining a consistent identity, professional appearance, and ease of use and maintenance, technical standards are established for all LCS teacher web pages.

Basic Layout

- Provide a consistent design style and organization across pages. The look and feel of the web site should tie it together as a single entity or "place".
- Use consistent navigation controls, images, color schemes, background, and organization across pages.
- Follow the "three click rule" -- every page on the site should be accessible with less than 3 clicks from the home page.
- Use the word "Home" or a "Home logo" in the upper left-hand corner of every page.
- Keep backgrounds simple. Light colors are better. Select backgrounds that make text easy to read and reusing backgrounds make pages load faster
- Pages should be sized so they will display properly in a variety of screen resolutions. Pages should be previewed and tested at least at "640 x 480", "800 x 600", and "1024 x 768".
- Do not use "under construction" words or graphics.

Files and Attachments

- Use all lower-case letters for names of documents and graphics.
- Do not use any spaces or other symbols in naming HTML documents or graphics.
- Label visible document file names appropriately.
- Use PDF format when posting attachments. This will ensure that the content of your documents cannot be altered and can be opened by most users.

- Video and audio files may be used when they are appropriate and are compressed properly. They are generally large files that take long "load times" for the user, and many times require some users (non-district networked machines) to have special plug-ins or viewers/players, in order to view or hear the files.

Fonts and Text

- Use consistent font sizes and type.
- The preferred text color is black; however colors may be used if necessary to convey a message or urgency, importance or warning. You should never use a full page of red or green text.
- Avoid using white text or links (white is difficult to print).
- It is recommended that regular text entries on web pages should be limited to the fonts "Arial" and "Times New Roman" on the PC, or "Helvetica" and "Times" on the Macintosh.
- Any special fonts should be saved and used as graphics to ensure that they display properly.
- Do not underline words on the pages. To the web user, underlined words look like hyperlinks and are confusing.

Graphics

- Use graphics sparingly and reuse graphics when appropriate. When graphics are reused, they remain in the computer and will load more quickly onto a web page.
- Make sure that all graphics are meaningful and relevant to the content on the web site.
- Smaller is better, images should be less than 50k.
- Pictures need to be in GIF or JPEG format.
- Use GIF format for drawings and line art.
- Use JPEG format for photographic color images.
- Follow all copyright laws.

Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

- District web sites must be in compliance with the Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards. You shall ensure that the web page allows people with disabilities to have the same access to and use of information and data as individuals without disabilities have.
- Test web pages at *HiSoftware-Cynthia Says Portal* (<http://www.contentquality.com/>) and see if you meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the U.S. Section 508 Guidelines and what to do if you do not meet the guidelines.
- Provide short, simple and meaningful alternative text for all graphical features.
- Provide transcripts, descriptions or subtitles for video and audio files to assist people with visual and hearing disabilities.

These guidelines will be evaluated and updated as needed in response to the changing nature of technology and its applications in the Leon County School District.

Glossary

Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) A written agreement that outlines appropriate use of the Internet. This agreement is typically signed by students, parents, and teachers.

Background Gray is the default backdrop of a World-Wide-Web page. HTML code can determine a color or a tiled-image to be displayed behind the text and graphics.

Browser Client software that provides an interface to the World Wide Web, such as Netscape, Mosaic, Internet Explorer, Lynx, etc.

Document library A folder where a collection of files is stored and where the files frequently use the same template. Each file in a library is associated with user-defined information that is displayed in the content listing for that library.

E-mail Electronic mail allows users to send and receive messages.

Graphic Images Graphics for web pages need to be in the JPEG or GIF format. JPEG supports a higher color depth (number of colors), GIFs support fewer colors. However, JPEG is a "lossy" format. In other words, some data is always lost in the compression of the image. In general, the smaller the size of the image (in pixels), the more quickly it will load. JPEGs are more appropriate for color photographic images, GIFs are better for simple drawings and line art.

GIF Format	JPEG Format
Supports 8 bit (256) colors	Supports 24 bit (16.7 million) colors
Better for drawings and line art	Better for photographic color images
Supports transparencies	Does not support transparencies
Image maps should always be in GIF format	

Graphic Interchange Format (GIF) A popular format for graphic images that compresses the image and stores the color information within the file. GIFs are limited to 8 bits-256 colors and are better for line art and solid color images.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language) The programming language used for creating hypertext documents for the World-Wide-Web.

Image map A picture on the World-Wide-Web that reports mouse clicks by the area of the screen that is selected and then links to appropriate information. Image maps do not work on some older browsers and text-only browsers.

Interlacing Allows a picture to appear in stages so the user can see the picture as it is coming in.

Internet The global collection of computer networks that uses TCP/IP protocols that evolved from ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) that was developed in the late 1960's and early 1970's by the United States Department of Defense as a network that could withstand a nuclear war.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Expert Group) A standard for compressing and decompressing images. JPEG is a popular format for color photographs.

Link Text or images that connect to a new page of information or another location on that page. Links are usually highlighted.

Mail-To An HTML command that allows the user to select this link and a mail message will be generated to the specified user.

Navigation Tools Links on a page that indicate the specific path a person can take through a web site. Common navigation tools include forward, back, up, and home.

Page A screen on the World-Wide-Web.

Permissions Authorization to perform operations associated with a shared resource, such as a file, directory, or printer. Permissions must be granted by the system administrator to individual user accounts or administrative groups.

SharePoint The LCS standard platform for the creation of web sites. It enables organizations to create a single points of access —portals — for aggregating resources from diverse systems. It enables collaboration through information organization and search capabilities. With SharePoint, teachers have the ability to build electronic document management & workflow integrated software solutions that allow you to organize information, readily access that information, manage documents, and enable efficient collaboration, all in a familiar, browser-based and Microsoft Office–integrated environment.