

# Darien Public Schools

## Staff Guidance on Website Creation Tools

Darien Public Schools is committed to providing equal access to information and resources for all students, parents, and the community, including individuals with disabilities. Staff are not required to offer or maintain a website, but may wish to do so in support of their work with students and families. A staff member may create a website using our district vendor (FinalSite) or Google Sites. FinalSite and the new version of Google Sites use a responsive web design that supports viewing content on a range of device types and screen sizes. There are other resources available to create websites, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis after consulting with the technology department.

This document outlines considerations for teachers when creating and maintaining web content to ensure compliance with web accessibility standards and copyright laws.

### Web Accessibility:

**Template Selection:** When creating or updating web content on Google Sites, select templates provided by Google Sites. Those templates are designed with appropriate color contrast. Similarly, FinalSite content should maintain a consistent look in alignment with other school district pages.

**Content Structure:** Organize content using proper heading levels to create a clear and logical hierarchy. Use headings, subheadings, and normal text as standard options. This helps all users, including those with disabilities, navigate the content.

**Image Descriptions:** All non-decorative images, graphics, and charts must have meaningful alternative text (a.k.a “alt text”) that describes the content and purpose of the image. Keep the alt text brief and descriptive of the image. Do not include the phrases “image of” or “picture of” when writing alt descriptions.

**Language:** At this time Google Sites does not feature an embedded tool to easily switch text from English to other languages. FinalSites features some limited translation services. Multilingual learners and their families may need additional language support to access content.

**Video Content:** Embedded videos should provide captions (CC) or transcripts to make the content accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Auto-Playing Media:** Avoid using auto-playing media, as it can be disruptive to screen reading software. Allow users to choose to play audio or video content.

**Accessibility Testing:** Staff are encouraged to use accessibility testing tools, such as [WAVE](#) or other online validators, to check for accessibility issues and make necessary improvements.

## Copyright Compliance:

Staff must adhere to all applicable copyright laws and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, text, images, videos, and audio for use on created websites. Your school librarian is a valuable resource for the consideration of copyright and fair use.

**Permission and Licensing:** Staff are responsible for ensuring they have the necessary permissions or licenses to use any copyrighted materials. This might include videos, images, or printables. Properly attribute all content.

**Fair Use:** Staff should familiarize themselves with the concept of "fair use" under copyright law and exercise it responsibly. Fair use allows limited use of copyrighted materials for educational purposes, but specific criteria must be met. When considering if a use is fair, keep in mind that a web page offers a wider potential audience.

**Public Domain and Creative Commons:** Staff are encouraged to use content that is in the public domain or carries a Creative Commons license, as these materials often have fewer restrictions regarding use.

**Student-Created Content:** If students contribute content to a web page, staff must ensure that they have permission to use the student-generated content. Image or video content that includes the face or front view of a student should not identify the student by name. Staff are responsible for verifying permission to use student images in our student information system (ASPEN).

## Other Advice:

**Links:** Staff are responsible for ensuring that links on their website direct users to appropriate resources. Periodic testing of hyperlinks after a site is published is necessary.

Please reach out to the Instructional Technology Coordinator if you have any questions or need further guidance.

Last updated: 3/2024