

CODE: CNB.AR**EFFECTIVE DATE:** (23-08-2023)**TOPIC:** Electronic Signatures**ISSUE DATE:** (23-08-2023)**REVIEW YEAR:** (2030)

OBJECTIVE

To provide clarity, direction and transparency around the use of electronic signatures across the Division, and to establish:

- The information technology standards to be used by the Division.
- The requirements as to the method of making electronic signatures.
- The reliability of electronic signatures in order to be accepted by the Division.

DEFINITIONS

Electronic Signature is defined in the *Electronic Transactions Act* as “electronic information that a person creates or adopts in order to sign a record and that is in, attached to or associated with the record.” An electronic signature is an identification method that captures the approval, verification or authorization of the person signing the document in a digital record.

RESPONSIBILITY

Central decision unit supervisors and principals are responsible to ensure staff:

- Adhere to Division standards and expectations relevant to the collection of electronic signatures.
- Only use Division developed and approved business processes to support the collection of electronic signatures.

Central decision unit supervisors are responsible to:

- Provide clear guidance to Division staff regarding electronic signature processes associated with their decision unit.
- Provide clear guidance to Division staff regarding the management of both electronic and paper based processes, including retention, for forms associated with their decision unit. This guidance will align with the Division’s Retention Schedule.

Principals are responsible to:

- Support staff and families as they engage with digital Division business processes which may require an electronic signature.
- Provide a traditional, paper-based process to obtain a written signature if a family is unable or unwilling to use the digital Division process.

REGULATION

Electronic signatures provide the opportunity for staff, parents/guardians, community stakeholders and vendors to provide their approval or verification when required by the Division.

In Edmonton Public Schools, any decision units that choose to implement electronic signatures to support their own business process must do so in alignment with Division standards and expectations.

DIVISION PRINCIPLES

1. The use of electronic signatures is optional for parents/guardians and community members.
2. Subject to compliance with Division standards and expectations, electronic signatures may be implemented by decision units with consideration to:
 - a. Increase convenience for families.
 - b. Streamline services across decision units.
 - c. Expedite workflow processes within the decision unit.
 - d. Facilitate efficiency with respect to Division processes.
 - e. Increase the security of information.
 - f. Reduce environmental impact.
3. Electronic signatures may be implemented where technically and financially feasible.
4. If a requirement for written consent is referenced in a Division administrative regulation, procedure or practice, an electronic signature may be used, provided the process to record the signature is implemented in alignment with the Division standards and expectations outlined in this administrative regulation.

DIVISION STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. Prior to electronically signing a document, Central departments will work with Cyber Security Services to ensure use of an acceptable electronic signature platform. Cyber Security Services will maintain a list of acceptable electronic signature platforms which meet the Alberta Electronic Signature Technical Standard.
2. Internally, the Division will accept login credentials of staff as an electronic signature. Staff are required to protect their confidential passwords.
3. The process of electronically signing a record must create an unalterable record that can be produced by the Division as required. The process for capturing an electronic signature must:
 - a. Include a process for managing the resulting record.
 - b. Create an entry in a database that cannot be altered and which generates an audit log or creates a PDF that is stored in a secure document system that has restricted access and the document system generates an audit log of any changes.
4. Acceptance of electronic signatures will be authorized by the Division when:
 - a. Obtaining consent from a parent with respect to matters relating to a program or activity offered by the Division to a student, including, but not limited to, field trip forms, technology use agreements, waived pre-requisite approvals, consents for service and Individual Program Plans.
 - b. Obtaining a verification and/or selection from a parent, including, but not limited to, Registration Forms, Student Information Correction Forms, pre-enrolment selection, course selections and student progress reports.
 - c. Obtaining consent from a staff member for matters relating to their employment with the Division.
 - d. Obtaining consent from a parent or staff member with respect to the use or disclosure of an individual's personal information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* [FOIP] for all purposes for which consent is required under FOIP.

- e. Obtaining verification from a staff member, including, but not limited to, timesheets, *Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation* acknowledgements and applications for job postings.
- f. Signifying approval in a workflow, including, but not limited to, approval for Division reports, letters, expenses and contracts.

REFERENCES

CN.BP Managing Division Information

CN.AR Creation, Use and Maintenance of Division Information

CNA.BP Information Security

CNA.AR Security of Personal and Division Information

[*Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation*](#)

[*Electronic Transactions Act*](#)

[*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#)

[Government of Alberta Electronic Signature Technical Standard](#)

[Division Retention Schedule](#)