## Backgrounder for Pinterest

## What is Pintrest?

Pinterest (https://www.pinterest.com/) is a free, social media tool that allows its users to pin a variety of different materials (webpages, photos, videos, etc.) to boards that are saved in a user's account.  This site can be used to upload, gather, sort, save and share important materials be creating thematic boards.  As the user visits different locations on the Web or browses files on any personal device, the pinning icon is clicked.  Pinning an item adds that material to a board that can be named and thereby designated a specific theme.  Once the boards are created, other members of Pinterest may view the boards inside of the program.  Account holders can also pin the boards of other contributors.  As more and more pins are added, the Pinterest feed will start creating unique personalized results and make suggestions of other boards that might interest the user.  If a user does not wish to share the boards inside of his/her account, an option to make private boards does exist.  Pinterest is a powerful tool for collecting materials on a particular theme from various locations.  Those resources can then be easily shared to allow for collaboration of ideas and creation of projects.

## Why use Pinterest in the classroom?

Pinterest is a great tool for gathering and sorting resources.  As students click from page to page on the Internet, they often forget which sites they traveled to or where a particular fact came from.  With the use of Pinterest, students can pin the Web pages as they visit them so as not to lose any valuable resources.  Not only can content pages be pinned, but videos, animations and images can also be pinned to thematic boards.  Using Pinterest will help students remain organized and reference the location where information was used in a Bibliography for a project if one is needed.

Pinterest is a social media site that allows for collaboration with others.  If students are working in groups, there is the ability to share boards by invitation.  In doing so, students can share resources, critique the validity of the information and collaborate while creating a project. Sharing information inside of Pinterest is simple and can remain private for group members.

In Biology, it is my intention to have students use Pinterest in a variety of different ways.  As part of the curriculum, students are going to research a genetic disorder of their choice.  While they are navigating the Internet, they will use Pinterest to mark valuable sites and create a new board that pertains to their

topic. Once they have visited several different sites, they will then use the pins on their board as their materials to create a PowerPoint or an info graphic of the information on that specific genetic disorder. At a later date, students will use Pinterest to go a learning outcome scavenger hunt and at another time, they will use boards that I have created to explore the different body systems.

## Social Media and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners

Students expect to use technology and social media as part of their learning process. Today's students have grown up with the internet and have been exposed to a variety of Web tools that allow them to interact, shape and transform information found on the internet all the while, being highly connected with their peers. Using social media tools in the classroom not only aligns with the learning needs of today's students, but it also helps shape them for future employment after high school. Today's work force is changing. Students need to be well versed in a variety of different Web tools so as to produce a high level end product. Employees are also looking for individuals that are able to collaborate and demonstrate the ability to work in groups.

## Potential Risks Associated with Pinterest

### i. Too much personal information

When creating a user account for Pinterest, students will be required to fill in a user agreement. Students will be asked to provide their first and last name in addition to a viable email account. Users can also upload a photo for their user profile and give permission to access other social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook via their Pinterest account. If users are accessing Pinterest on a mobile device such as cell phone, Pinterest may ask to for the user's location.

To avoid providing too much personal information while creating a user account students will:

- Only use the initial of their last names or provide a pseudonym
- Not upload any personal photos to use on their profile page
- Not connect Pinterest to other social media sites
- Decline the offer from Pinterest that allows ask for user's location
- Create a new account for educational purposes if a pre-existing account for Pinterest does not meet these parameters
- For further information, please refer to Pinterest's Privacy policy (https://about.pinterest.com/en/privacy-policy)

### ii. Server location for Pinterest is outside of Canada

Pinterest's server is located in the United States.  This means that the data stored on Pinterest's server is not protected under the same privacy laws as we have in Canada.  In Canada, the privacy and safety is held in high esteem, whereas in the United States, any information on an American server can fall under the umbrella of the Patriot Act and thereby by seized by the government.  While creating education projects, it is unlikely that there will be any privacy issues with the materials being placed on the server but it is important for both students and parents to understand the potential risks that exist prior to using a social media tool such as Pinterest.

### iii. Pinterest is an Open Web tool

What does this mean?  An open tool permits all its users access to other members contributions inside of Pinterest.  Although, this can be a powerful tool when trying to collaborate and share resources, it might not be a desirable situation when dealing with students. To avoid other individuals accessing the materials that we are creating for this course, students will be making their boards private. 'Secret boards' in Pinterest lock down the ability for others to view a student's work.  If collaborating between peers or me is necessary, then the owner of the private board can send a personal invitation to another user.

**Even with all these precautions put in place, no internet experience can ever be a hundred percent risk fee.  I will continuously monitor my students' actions and take reasonable measures in order to manage any possible risks**.


### Useful sites for those new to Pinterest

https://about.pinterest.com/en/terms-service
http://www.realsimple.com/work-life/technology/how-to-use-pinterest

https://help.pinterest.com/en/guide/all-about-pinterest

http://w.youtube.com/watch?v=vQP2dBMoCQ0


### Consent Letter

Attached to this document is a consent letter asking permission to allow your child to use Pinterest at school.  Hopefully, after reading the information above, you now have a better understanding of what Pinterest is and the goals we are trying to achieve by using this tool.  Once you have read the letter, please sign it and have your son/daughter to return it to school.  If you do not wish your child to use Pinterest,

please indicate so on the consent letter and your child will be given a similar project that doesn't require them to use Pinterest.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email (kym_toporowski@sd34.bc.ca).