

# Parent Document

## What is Canvas?

Canvas by Instructure (more commonly known as Canvas) is a Learning Management System (LMS) that is available as a cloud based or server based LMS. Canvas provides an extensive and open API that they publish to the world, making it easy for third-party apps to plug into Canvas. Canvas has made an explicit commitment to their user's privacy; they conduct regular internal audits and even contract independent security specialists to perform and publish a public security audit. The interface is well laid out and there are many customization options.

## Why am I using Canvas?

In an effort to bring our students together and connect with each other to create a sense of community, we will be using Canvas. Canvas allows your child to connect with other students in a password protected, invite only area where the teacher has full moderation abilities and can check on everything that is happening.

You child will be using Canvas to:

- access assignments
- upload completed assignments
- have discussions in the forum
- complete tests
- ask questions / email their teacher
- use external tools and websites when necessary to gain more understanding

## Risks that could arise

Because Canvas is hosted "in the cloud" it is important for parents to understand some key points:

- The cloud is everywhere. This means that you are able to access it from any device that is connected to the internet, you also need to be aware that others can also do the same so keeping your password private is essential.
- The cloud stores your information so that you don't have to. This means that there will be much more room on your device because once something is uploaded on to the cloud it will remain there and be accessible.

## What's 'personal information'?

"People have different standards of what they consider 'personal' information. Sharing over social media has done a fair bit to reset our expectation. Regardless of personal definition, if the information, data, or content could be used to identify you, it's 'personal information' – though professional or business contact information may be treated separately." 1(Hengstler, 2013). A student's personal Changes may occur; this document is current as of terms of service on July 29, 2014. Check with your own school to make sure it meets your school's privacy policy. Review completed by Breanne Quist.

information could include: name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address, educational information, and anything that identifies an individual, including photographs. If any information, data or content could be used to identify you it is then qualified as “personal information”.

### **Why is BC so sensitive to privacy laws regarding data?**

“Shortly after the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001, the American government enacted the United States Patriot Act that allowed the United States government to search private and public data housed on servers on United States soil. At the time, The British Columbia Medical Services Plan was hosting our provincial medical records in the United States. Unions in British Columbia expressed concern over the ability of the American government to search through British Columbian’s personal medical records and histories. Ultimately, the rule is: if you transfer or authorize the transfer of your personal information outside of Canada, that data is subject to the laws and practices of the country where it sits – be it the United States, China, or India. (Remember that minors, under the legal care of an adult, cannot authorize such a transfer.) Not all locations have similar notions about your right to privacy. Since cloud computing is a relatively new technology, the laws and best practices governing it are still changing and there is a need to stay current.”<sup>1</sup>(Hengstler, 2013)

### **Why is a consent form necessary?**

Various provinces in Canada – and other jurisdictions across the world – have enacted laws to protect personal privacy. In BC, the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) covers all independent schools. It is one of the most defined privacy protection frameworks in Canada. PIPA states that ‘private bodies’ such as independent schools have defined legal requirements for handling your personal information when it is within their ‘custody’ and ‘control’. Generally, private bodies must make sure that your personal information cannot be stored or accessed outside of Canada without your expressed permission – ‘consent’ (Note: there are certain expectations in the law like data covered by treaties, etc.). PIPA states that your consent must be in writing, state to whom your personal information may be disclosed, and how your information will be used. Also, if you post personal information about others, their permission must also be secured.

### **What if I don’t want to consent?**

You have the right as a parent/guardian to withhold consent to your child using Canvas. Alternate activities will be provided to students in the event that parents/caregivers choose to withhold consent and that selection of an alternate activity will not affect a student’s grade.

While no internet-based experience can ever be 100% risk-free, know that I will take every reasonable measure to manage expected risks.

<sup>1</sup> Julia Hengstler is the Educational Technologist with the Faculty of Education at Vancouver Island University & an Instructor in Educational Technology. Please visit this site for more background information about her:  
[http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler\\_j.asp](http://www.viu.ca/education/faculty/profiles/hengstler_j.asp)

