



User Guide

Chapter 9

[Blog Page](#)

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Who Should Use this Guide

The contents of this guide are written to be readable by users of all technical backgrounds. Primarily, this guide will be used by administrators, department coordinators, principals and curriculum coordinators at schools and districts.

If you have access to a training site, it is a good idea to practice the steps covered in this guide before working on your real site. This eliminates the risk of you accidentally deleting important content on your real site.

Introduction

Blogs have become immensely popular in recent years. This is largely because blogs offer a fantastic communication medium through which individuals can share information and receive feedback from an audience. Furthermore, the introduction of RSS feeds has increased the blog's communicative powers since audiences can now subscribe to a blog and receive updates in real-time. There are several ways in which SharpSchool's Blogs can be utilized in an educational setting:



- **District to Community:** Principals and teachers can create blog pages to discuss school or class related activities with the community.
- **Internal Discussions:** Teachers can set up blogs to carry out internal discussions with colleagues and students.
- **Student Blogs:** Students can participate in moderated blogs to discuss activities and class related projects.
- **Event Blogs:** School committees can set up blogs to discuss past or upcoming events.

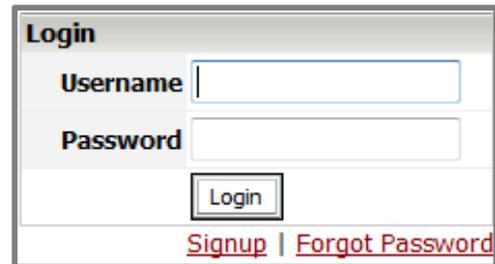
Blogs and Security

SharpSchool's Blogs offer a secure medium through which teachers and students can communicate with each other and the school community. However, in order to completely benefit from this tool it is important for district administrators and users to understand the blog's security protocols. The most evident challenge in such an open medium of communication is ensuring that inappropriate content is filtered and tracked.

SharpSchool's Blog offers administrators and teachers the tools needed to guarantee student protection, whilst facilitating constructive communication. Some key tools include user based authentication, comment approvals and the ability to filter comments by IP address. These tools are detailed further in this manual and it is recommended that blog authors invest some time in familiarizing themselves with blog security.

Key Information

In order to begin managing blogs, you must first log into your site using your Username and Password.



The screenshot shows a login interface with the following elements:

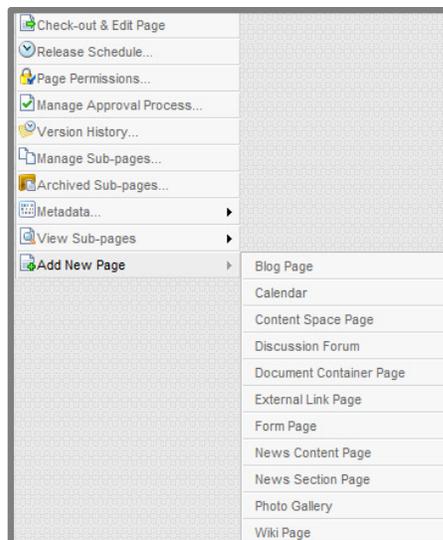
- Login** (Title)
- Username** (Text label) followed by an input field.
- Password** (Text label) followed by an input field.
- Login** (Text label) inside a button.
- [Signup](#) | [Forgot Password](#) (Links)

I. Adding a Blog Page



Reminder: The gray navigation bar on the top of the page is specific to the page you are viewing. You must first select the parent page under which you'd like to create the *Blog Page*.

- 1) Go to **Page Properties** in the gray tool bar and scroll down to **Add New Page**. Now click on **Blog Page**.



- 2) The following page will prompt you to name the blog. After naming the page there are several setup options with the blog:
 - a) **Blog:** You can select whether to create a new blog or link this blog to an existing one. When linking to an existing blog you will not be able to add posts until the administrator of that blog allows your authoring permissions.

- b) **Option:** This section gives you the ability to decide whether the blog opens in a new window or an existing one.

- 3) The resulting page contains 5 areas of content for the blog:

Area 1: The blog posts area.

Area 2: This section is visible only to the administrators of the blog. We will be returning to this area in the following section of this guide.

Area 3: Offers profile information for administrators of the blog.

Area 4: Provides links to the group blogs available on your site.

Area 5: Allows users to subscribe to RSS feeds on your blog.



Note: At any time the *Sidebar* can be customized.

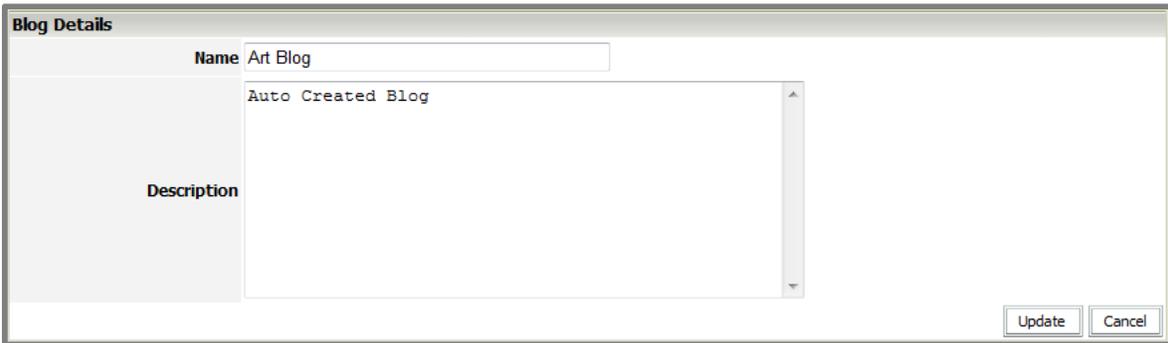
II. Blog Administration

The *Blog Administration* is the backend engine of the blog. This section is divided into 6 main components:

- 1) **Edit:** This is where you can change the name of blog.
- 2) **Posts:** Gives you the ability to create and search posts.
- 3) **Comments:** Allows the ability to filter and search comments.
- 4) **Post Categories:** Establishes unique categories for your blog posts.
- 5) **Configuration:** This section contains all permission, security, podcast licensing and configuration items pertaining to the blog.
- 6) **View Blog:** Provides a final and completed view of the blog.

1) Edit Blog

The **Edit Blog** tab allows you to rename the blog, include a description and change the template of the blog.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Blog Details". It has two main input areas: "Name" and "Description". The "Name" field contains the text "Art Blog". The "Description" field contains the text "Auto Created Blog". At the bottom right of the form, there are two buttons: "Update" and "Cancel".

2) Creating Posts

There are two primary ways in which a post may be added to a blog. First is the main interface of the blog page where the **New Post** link is available on the upper right corner of the page. And second, a post may be added via the *Blog Administration* interface.

Edit	Posts	Comments	Post Categories	Configuration	View Blog
View Posts		<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Search"/>	<input type="button" value="View All"/>	
Posts					+ Add Post
Title	Category	Date	Publish Status	Comment Status	Actions
Reading and Learning		7/22/2010	Published	Open	
New "Classic" Books and Literature		7/22/2010	Published	Open	
Book Club		7/22/2010	Published	Open	

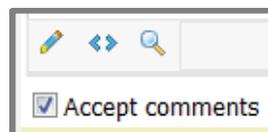
By simply clicking on **Add Post**, you will be taken to the editing interface of the blog. This section is divided into 2 areas:

a. Create New Post

In this section, you will be required to fill out details of the blog post. This includes: the **Post Title** (this title will be displayed on the blog page), the **Category** (allocate the post to a topical category), **Tags** (assign key words) and finally author the content of the blog in the **Post Body** section. The **Post Body** section features the same editor used for authoring content for web pages on your site. For a detailed explanation of all the buttons in the editor, refer to *Appendix A* of the SharpSchool documentation.



Note: The **Accept Comments** field determines whether you wish for visitors to be able to publish comments for posts at all. Deselecting this feature will prevent users from posting any comments.



Create a new post

Post Title

Category

Tags

Post Body

Accept comments

b. Uploading Podcasts

In addition to content publication, SharpSchool’s blogs also feature podcasts. A podcast is a series of audio and/or video files that are made available for download or subscription through an RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feed.

To upload a podcast, click on **Browse** to select a file from your computer. The **Podcast Title** is the title of the podcast as it will be displayed in the blog menu. For copyright purposes, it is important to indicate the **Podcast License** of your media file. When finished uploading the file, click **Post Now** if you want to post the podcast immediately or **Save As Draft** if you wish to complete this blog at a later date.

3) Managing Comments

SharpSchool’s blog feature allows blog administrators to moderate comments made to blogs. This tool is vital in a corporate setting since it is imperative that all content on a corporate site be validated and approved prior to publication.

Comment	Post	Created On	Created By	Ip Address	Approved Action	
Inspirational Group	Book Club	07/22/10 03:38 PM	pat.david	174.94.136.74	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

The **Filter** dropdown allows you to filter comments by status, such as:

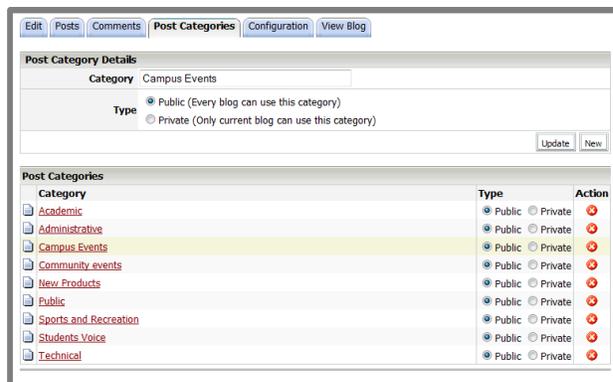
- 1) **All Comments:** This view displays all comments and is the default view of the Comments report.
- 2) **Unapproved:** Displays the comments that have yet to be approved.
- 3) **Comment IP Address** - Allows you to search comments by IP Address to find posts made from a particular computer.
- 4) **Comment Date:** Shows only the comments made on a particular date.

You can authorize a comment to become public by checking off on in the **Approve** column. You can also delete comments by clicking on the button in the **Action** column.

4) Post Categories

Topical categories are useful when publishing blogs since they make it easier for readers to find posts on a particular subject. To create a new category for your blog:

- 1) Simply type in the name in the **Category** field and click on **Add**.
- 2) Categories can be set to **Public** or **Private**. A **Public** category can be used by every blog and a **Private** category can only be used by the current blog.
- 3) Category can be deleted by clicking the  button in the **Action** column.



Note: Deleting a category does not delete the posts allocated to it. Deleting blog posts can only be performed through the **Posts** tab in **Blog Administration**.

5) Blog Configuration

The **Configuration** tab is the most important section of the **Blog Administration** menu. This section contains house-keeping components for all elements of the blog, such as RSS feeds, security, moderation and many more.

The **Configuration** tab is further broken into 6 main categories:

- a) Settings
- b) Moderation
- c) RSS Feeds
- d) Sidebar
- e) Licensing
- f) Security

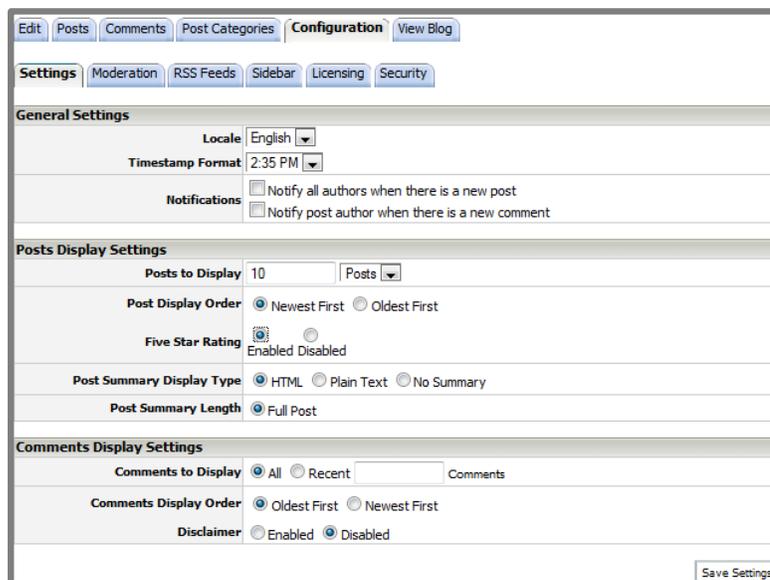
a. Settings

Via the **Settings** tab, administrators have the ability to make quick and easy changes to the blog.

This area is divided into 3 main sections:

- 1) **General: Email Notification** can be switched on or off here, and the way time is displayed can be set in **Timestamp Format**.
- 2) **Post Display:** You can configure the display parameters of posts on your blog.

- 3) **Five Star Rating:** If this is enabled, users will be able to assign each blog post a rating between one and five stars.
- 4) **Comments Display:** Allows the number of comments displayed to be set. The order of comments can be set to display **Oldest First** or **Newest First**.
- 5) **Disclaimer:** Allows blog administrators to add a disclaimer to the post commenting process. Users will be required to agree with the disclaimer by checking the associated box when commenting on a post.

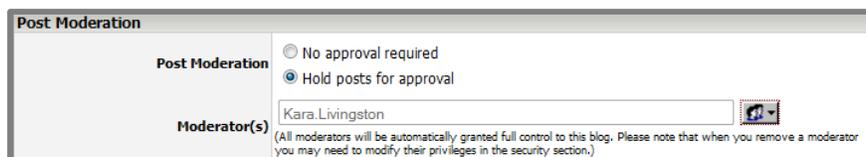


b. Moderation

The **Moderation** tab allows you to control the approval rules for creating posts and comments on your blog.

i. Post Moderation

Post moderation allows you to choose whether or not approval is required before a post created for a blog will appear on the blog page. If approval is required, this is where you can choose which user or users have the right to approve new posts. This can be useful if you want to designate many blog authors but still maintain final posting authority on anything that shows up on the blog.



After making a change to the post moderation rules or moderators, click **Save Settings** at the bottom of the page to save the configuration changes.

ii. Comment Moderation

Comment moderation allows you to determine who can post comments to a blog post and whether approval is required before new comments show up on the post.

Comment Moderation	
Comment Availability	<input type="radio"/> No one is allowed to comment <input type="radio"/> Only registered users may comment <input checked="" type="radio"/> All users may comment
Moderation	<input type="radio"/> No approval required <input checked="" type="radio"/> Hold comments for approval



Tip: If you want to allow all users to comment, it is a good idea to enable the **Hold comments for approval option**. That way you can ensure no inappropriate comments are posted to the blog.

When you have finished with your configuration changes, click **Save Settings** at the bottom of the page to save the configuration changes.

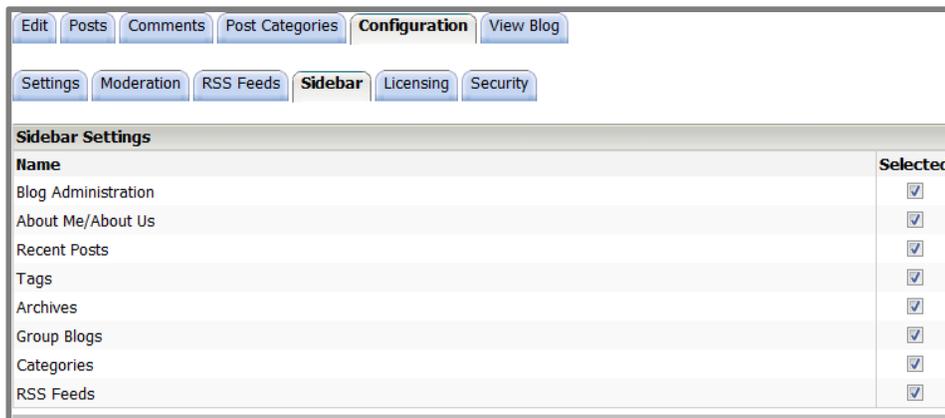
c. RSS Feeds

Via the **RSS Feeds** tab you have the ability to enable or disable RSS feeds.

Edit	Posts	Comments	Post Categories	Configuration	View Blog
Settings	Moderation	RSS Feeds	Sidebar	Licensing	Security
Site Feeds Settings					
RSS Feeds		<input checked="" type="radio"/> On <input type="radio"/> Off			
<input type="button" value="Save Settings"/>					

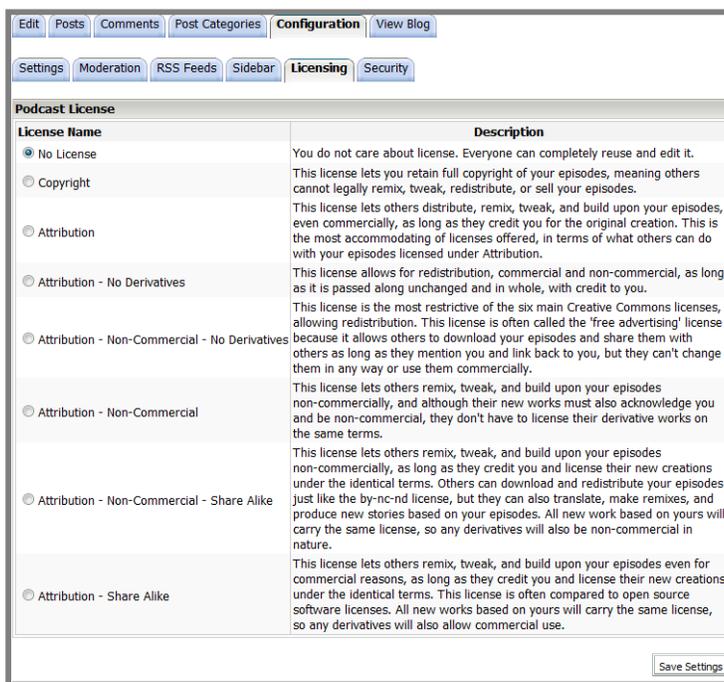
d. Blog Sidebar

You can select or deselect the items you would like to appear on the sidebar of your blog.



e. Licensing

This section allows you to determine the definition of all the licensing options as well as assign a particular default license for all podcasts.



f. Security

The **Security** section of the blog is managed in the same manner as all other SharpSchool modules. There are three essential user roles:

- 1) **Administrator:** These users have complete control of the blog.
- 2) **Authors:** Can only co-author content for the blog.
- 3) **Browsers:** Encompasses all users who can view and comment on the blog but cannot create any new blog posts.



Note: You must include the *Guest* user if you wish the blog to be public.

To add a user under a specific role category, simply click on the **Add** button. In the pop up window, click on the selected user and click on **Add** and then **OK**. Likewise, to remove a user, simply click on the checkbox next to the name and click **Remove**.

i. Direct Permissions

Direct Permissions refers to users who also have access to your blog, as these may be inherited permissions from a parent page. You can add and remove users from the **Direct Permissions** button in the same manner as **Roles**.

ii. Actual Permissions

This section refers to all the users within the administrators groups who have access to the blog. You cannot edit the users in the **Actual Permissions** list since this is controlled by site and/or global administrators.

6) View Blog

This tab gives you a complete and comprehensive view of the blog.

The screenshot displays a blog interface with the following components:

- Recent Posts:** A list of two posts:
 - [New School Logo](#), Posted by [pat.david](#) at 12:26 PM, [1 Comment](#)
 - [Annual School Picnic](#), Posted by [maple.shyla](#) at 12:21 PM, [1 Comment](#)
- Blog Administration:** A sidebar section containing:
 - Blog Summary:**
 - [2 Posts](#)
 - [2 Comments](#)
 - [New Post](#) (with a plus icon)
 - [Blog Administration](#) (with a gear icon)
- About Me:** A section with a profile picture and the name [trevor.mcgrady](#).
- Recent Posts (Summary):** A small list of the two posts shown in the main section:
 - [New School Logo](#)
 - [Annual School Picnic](#)