

# ePortfolios with Google Apps: A Starter Guide

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Think development, think quality



**Government of South Australia**

Department for Education and  
Child Development

This Starter Guide provides instructions to develop an ePortfolio using Google Sites.

ePortfolios provide an online opportunity to develop resources, collaborate with others, manage information, keep a reflective journal and much more, all in one spot. They are a fantastic way to actively participate in your own performance development. The possibilities are endless!

**Disclaimer: DECD and Workforce Development are not affiliated with Google or Google Sites in any way. Google Sites is not hosted nor endorsed by DECD or Workforce Development. Users create ePortfolios and use the services described in this Starter Guide at their own risk; DECD and Workforce Development take no responsibility for any cyber-safety or privacy issues that may arise if individuals choose to use Google Sites to create an ePortfolio.**

Cyber safety and protection of privacy is very important, especially when creating any workspace or learning opportunity online. It is imperative to think about the intended audience and those involved. It is important to always think carefully before putting any information, personal or otherwise, online. This is even more important when it involves people other than yourself.

As an educator keeping students safe is the number one priority. Make sure that no section of your ePortfolio shows pictures or videos of students which identify specific students—in some cases it may be appropriate to seek parent permission if you do choose to include photos of students. Last names should also not be included. You may also choose to consider whether or not to identify the school represented in the ePortfolio depending on its purpose. The same care should be taken and guidelines followed if attaching information related to other adults. Please remember your own privacy and cyber-safety as you begin to develop your ePortfolio. Protect yourself and others!

The following has been copied from the DECD website at :

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/default.asp?navgrp=cybersafety>

For further information please follow the link.

## Cyber Safety

In matters relating to cyber-safety, DECD works with, and is advised by:

- The DECD [Social Media Policy and Guidelines](#) support staff to effectively use and manage social media.
- the [Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum](#) - a child protection teaching and learning program in South Australian government schools and preschools, developed by experienced South Australian educators and child protection experts.
- the [Responding to Abuse and Neglect Training program](#) (previously Mandatory Notification Training).
- the Australian Communications and Media Authority [New ACMA Cyber Safety Website](#), which manages a national cyber-safety education and awareness program and is also responsible for monitoring online content, including Internet and mobile phone content, and enforcing Australia's anti-spam law.
- South Australia Police (SAPol).
- the [Coalition to Decrease Bullying, Harassment and Violence in South Australian Schools](#), which has representatives from the three schooling sectors and eminent international researchers Professor Ken Rigby, Professor Phillip Slee and Drs Barbara Spears and Shoko Yoneyama. The Coalition has produced and distributed Cyber bullying, e-crime and the protection of children and young people, an information pamphlet for parents and carers.

### Cyber-Safety: Keeping Children Safe in a Connected World

South Australian schools and preschools are exciting places in which to teach and learn: our children naturally take advantage of developments in technologies to personalise and expand their learning opportunities, and our educators provide rich learning environments for children as they engage with people and resources, locally and globally.

In this dynamic connected world of communication and learning, we need to ensure such opportunities do not place the young people in our schools and preschools at risk. Many of these risks are not new and educators are familiar with strategies and processes that maximise learning opportunities and outcomes, while minimising risk to children's safety and wellbeing.



## Recommendations: Consider your 'Shell'

Before starting using any ePortfolio site, it is very useful to brainstorm and diagram of the organisation you will be using for the pages within your ePortfolio. This is called the sidebar. By completing this step before you begin to build your actual ePortfolio the process becomes much clearer and time effective. Doing this as an outline or list that shows main pages and sub-pages is the best way to start. This example uses the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) for the shell:

**Home**

**Reflective Journal**

**Domains of Teaching**

**Professional Knowledge**

**Standard 1: Know your students and how they learn**

**Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it**

**Professional Practice**

**Standard 3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning**

**Standard 4: Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments**

**Standard 5: Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning**

**Professional Engagement**

**Standard 6: Engage in professional learning**

**Standard 7: Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers & the community**

**Mentoring**

**SSOs**

**Early Career Teachers**

**Student Teachers**

**Initiatives**

**ICT**

**Hub/Cluster**

**Whole School**

Once you've finished with the organisational aspect of your sidebar it's time to create your ePortfolio!

## **ePortfolios: Starting an ePortfolio with Google Sites**

Before beginning your ePortfolio using Google Sites, you may find it useful to look at other options in order to compare features of different ePortfolio platforms and software. There are many options available in both the free and paid categories.

This website is a good starting point to learn about ePortfolio related tools: <http://ow.ly/3aeMn>

### **A few things to think about as you begin your ePortfolio:**

- Who will be viewing your ePortfolio?
- What type of information do you want to include?
- Have you thought about the organisation of your ePortfolio?
- Have you thought about your privacy and cyber-safety?
- How can this ePortfolio help you with your own professional development?
- How often do you expect to update your ePortfolio?
- Can your ePortfolio be a collaborative tool?

### **Cyber-Safety and Privacy on the Internet:**

Google Sites is an online service that is not hosted by or affiliated with DECD. It is a 3rd party online hosting environment which allows you to choose who sees your ePortfolio, but in an online world it is important to think of the cyber-safety and privacy of individuals involved. Keep this in mind when including information in your ePortfolio. For example, use only first names of other adults, do not include specific contact details, avoid showing pictures of students or work with the students full-name. With a few simple steps it is possible to keep yourself safe in an online world. For more information regarding DECD cyber-safety policy visit

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/default.asp?navgrp=cybersafety>

### **Signing up for a Google Account.**

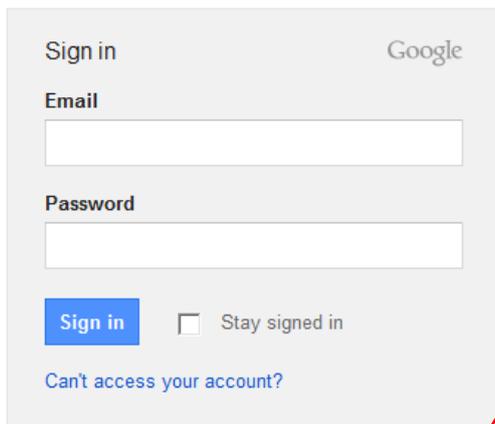
Once you've signed up for a Google Account you will be able to use any of the Google Apps to enhance your ePortfolio.

To create a Google Account **you can use an existing email address**. You will need to verify this address to start, so make sure you can check the email address from where you are sitting right now...

[Web History](#) | [Settings](#) ▼ | [Sign in](#)



When you click Sign in a new screen will open. On the right you will see the following options.



Sign in Google

Email

Password

Stay signed in

[Can't access your account?](#)

If you have an existing Google Account you may sign in with that now. **NOTE:** If you are on a school computer make sure that the **Stay signed in** box is **unticked**.

If you do not have a Google Account you will need to click on **Create an account now**.

When you have clicked 'Create an account' now a new screen will open. Fill out the required information in order to create your Google Account. **NOTE:** Make sure that you **untick** the boxes that say **Stay signed in** and **Enable web history**. Check you are happy with what boxes are ticked...

Once you have completed the sign up form you will have to go to the email you signed up with in order to verify your email address. Simply click on the link in the email they send and the step is completed.

## Accounts

Google has more to offer when you sign in to your Google Account.

Sign in on the right or [create an account for free](#).

Once you've verified your email address you are ready to begin your actual ePortfolio.

Go to Google Search and type in Google Sites (or go to [sites.google.com](http://sites.google.com)) . Use your account name and password to login. You are now logged in and ready to create an ePortfolio with Google Sites.

Once you're logged in you will see the option to **Create new site**, click the red **Create** button. A new page will open.

Choose a **template** to use



As you create your ePortfolio site choose the following options.

### Blank Template

Name your site (remember cyber-safety). For example you might name your site: First-Name—Teaching for a teaching ePortfolio or APST for an Australian Standards for Teachers certification Portfolio. This name needs to be unique and something professional that you could share with an employer/professional body/colleague.

Name your site:

Site location - URLs can only use the following characters: A-Z,a-z,0-9

<https://sites.google.com/site/>

- ▶ Select a theme
- ▶ More options

Click the **little arrow** beside **Select a theme** to choose a design that you like. When you've clicked the plus all of the theme templates will open and you can choose the one you like most. **NOTE:** Themes with a frame in the centre are easier to modify initially. You can change your backgrounds quite easily if you want.

**IMPORTANT:** Click the **little arrow** beside **More Options**. You may want to consider the information that is here.

Type the code shown:

quayfjv

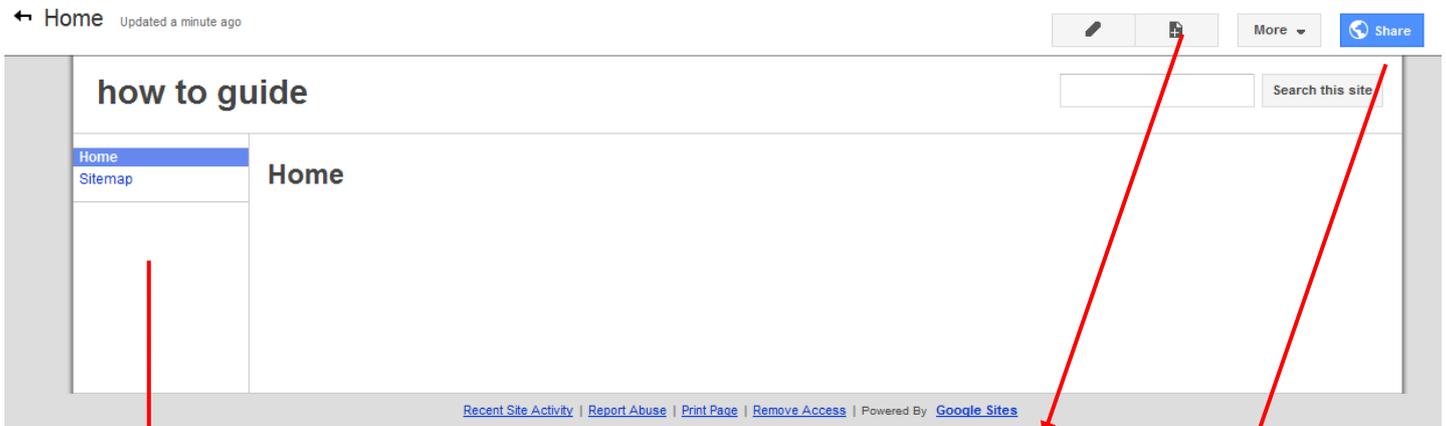
Sites

Type in the "hard to read" **code** and then click **create (at the top)**. It will take a few moments as your ePortfolio site is created.

# ePortfolios: Creating Pages with Google Sites

There are two different ways to approach the creation or organisational structure of pages using Google Sites. This handout will show the most simple way to do this but will require more organisation during the next stage of your ePortfolio creation.

The layout of Google Sites is easy to follow once you are more familiar with where things are located. The screenshots below will show you some of the features of your Google Sites ePortfolio.



Controls to manage and create content on your ePortfolio are located in the upper right corner.

**New page** allows you to make a new page to store content.

**Edit page** opens the page editor for the page you are on when you click it.

**More actions** opens a drop down menu which allows you to move or delete individual pages, manage the site (look, feel, content) and share the site with others.

Link to share

<https://sites.google.com/site/howtoguideportfolio/>

Share link via:



Who has access

 Public on the web - Anyone on the Internet can find and view

[Change...](#)



(you)

@gmail.com

Is owner

On the left side you can see that the page is private.

Click on CHANGE and then choose your settings. While you are developing your ePortfolio you may want to set it on private and only people who you add to the access list can see it provided they are log in.

A close-up screenshot of the sidebar buttons. The "Home" button is highlighted with a grey background, and the "Sitemap" button is below it.

When you press on the 'Sidemap' button you will be able to see the map of your site. This function you use to change the organisational structure of your ePortfolio. This is not where you add content and will not allow you to add pages. The next handout will describe how to use Edit sidebar in detail.

Now that you are familiar with the features and layout of your Google Sites ePortfolio, it's time to begin creating the pages of your ePortfolio.

The headings you choose for your pages will clearly define the type of information you will include on the page. Before beginning the creation of pages it is very important that you have decided upon the way you will organise your ePortfolio. (See 'Recommendations: Consider your shell' section on page 3.)

When you click **Create Page** on the upper right side of your Google Site it will open a new page which will ask you to choose a template for the page. Choosing the right type of page template is very important. You will find an explanation of the different page templates below:

### Select a template to use



#### Description of Templates:

- **Web Page:** This template is like the blank page of a word document. You can add text and pictures. There is an area to add attachments at the bottom, however this is not the ideal template to use if you will be uploading a lot of attachments. There is also a comments section (for collaboration) at the bottom.
- **Announcements:** This template acts like a blog and is ideal for reflection journals.
- **File Cabinet:** The file cabinet template has been built to act as a repository or virtual file cabinet. It is the template to choose if you plan to upload a lot of attachments.
- **List:** The list template allows you to create a simple, customisable form to fill out a list. It is easy to set-up, and use, and it is ideal for saving any information that could be recorded in a list format.

**NOTE:** Make sure that you do not change a template once you have begun to add content. If you change a template that has evidence, information or artefacts that you've uploaded to the page you may lose that information.

### Create a page in Site: how to guide

The screenshot shows the 'Create a page in Site' form. At the top, it says 'Name your page:' followed by a text input field containing 'Reflective Journal'. Below that, it shows 'Your page URL: /site/howtoguideeportfolio/reflective-journal' with a 'change URL' link. The next section is 'Select a template to use (Learn more)'. A dropdown menu is open, showing 'Web Page', 'Announcements', 'File Cabinet', and 'List'. A red arrow points from the 'Web Page' option in the dropdown to the 'Web Page' dropdown button. Below this, it says 'Select a location.' with two radio button options: 'Put page at the top level' (which is selected) and 'Put page under Home'. Under 'Put page under Home', there is a sub-option '» Reflective Journal' and a link '» Choose a different location'. A red arrow points from the 'Put page at the top level' radio button to the 'Web Page' dropdown button.

Once you have decided on the page template it's time to name the new page. The name needs to be something that will remind you about the type of information you want to include on that page.

Now you need to choose the location of the page. As a simple solution to location create all pages at top level. **NOTE:** We will change page order and organise the sidebar in the next session. At this time your new pages will be created and ordered alphabetically.

The last step is to click **Create page**. It will only take a few moments and you will have a new page on your ePortfolio.

Repeat those steps for each new page you wish to create on your ePortfolio.

## ePortfolios: All about saving your work

As you continue developing your ePortfolio and begin uploading your own work and adding content the ability to save is an absolute must. When you have created a page the page itself is automatically saved, but the content you add is not saved automatically.

There are two common locations for the save button in Google Sites. When you click Edit page and begin editing a page the usual menu of **Create page**, **Edit page** and **More Actions** is replaced with **Save** and **Cancel**.



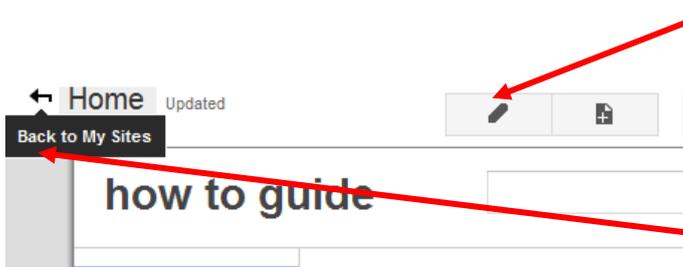
Once you have completed your edits click save and it will save your page and reopen in the standard (non-editable) view. **You must always click on 'Save' if you want to save the edits you have made on a page.**

**NOTE:** This is not the case if you've attached a file. When you attach a file it saves that file automatically. It may take a few moments for the file to show on the page, but if you have browsed for the file on your computer correctly it will show on the page when it's been uploaded. Adding a list item is similar to attaching an item and is saved automatically.

### About saving your site content changes from the 'More' Actions menu.

When you first begin to develop your ePortfolio this section will probably not be used. This is for users who have begun to alter the appearance, general information, and layout of their site once all of the organisational structure is in place. If you have not begun to do that with your ePortfolio this section does not apply to you at this time but you will need it for future reference.

Once you go into the **'More' Actions** menu and make your selections you will see these options on the upper left side of your page:



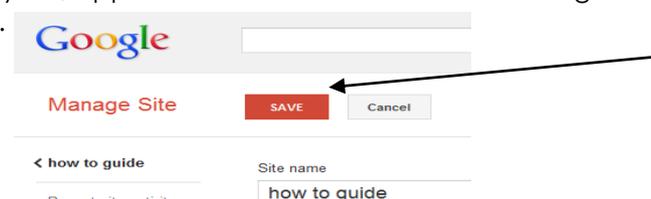
Whenever you make changes to the underlying structure of your ePortfolio (such as name changes, layout changes, site content, sidebar organisation and appearance) you will need to click **Save changes** before you click **Return to site** and wait for a small yellow notification that tells you your changes have been saved.

**NOTE:** If you do not click **Save changes** before you **Return to site**, you will lose all edits you have made

Whenever you need to save there will be a save option somewhere on screen. Before navigating away from any page where you've added or modified content always look for Save or Save changes. If you do not see either of those then chances are that you do not need to do a specific save related to the changes you've made.

### **These save features are often located at the top of the screen.**

- When you are editing individual pages or page content the save button shows on the upper right side of the screen.
- When you are editing the whole site content, layout, appearance or sidebar the save changes button shows on the upper left side of the screen. e.g...



## ePortfolios: Working on the sidebar or using horizontal navigation

When you have finished creating all of the pages for your ePortfolio you are ready to organise your sidebar. This is the most difficult step when creating an ePortfolio, however once you have a basic idea of how the sidebar works the process will make much more sense.

The key is to remember that you may not create a new page from the sidebar/navigation tabs. You may only change the view of existing pages. In other words, the sidebar/navigation tabs can change the look and layout of your ePortfolio but it will not change the actual content.

Currently, the organisational structure is set to automatic and will show your pages in alphabetical order. This may not be the organisational structure that you need for your ePortfolio. To change the way this looks you will need to enter the Sitemap

**You may wish to have a horizontal navigation menu which makes your ePortfolio look more like a webpage with tabs across the top.**

**To do this go into 'Site Layout' then 'Change Site Layout' and tick the 'Horizontal Navigation Bar' button.**

Once you've clicked Edit sidebar I recommend that you change the sidebar width to 250 pixels to add more room for your sidebar. You will only need to do this once. The default setting is 150 pixels which is often a bit too narrow. To do this click **Change site layout**.

When you've clicked **Change site layout** a new window will pop-up. In this window find the section titled Sidebar and change the width to **250 pixels**. Then click **Ok** at the bottom.

Then **SAVE** on the next

### To reorganise the pages in your sidebar.

1. Click on SITEMAP
2. Click on 'Manage pages'

#### Sitemap

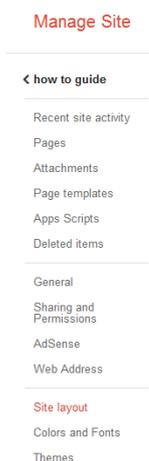


[Collapse all](#) [Manage pages](#)

3. Pressing on the small plus next to pages will open the drop down menu.
4. Drag the pages around to get the order/structure you want.
5. Further tools are also available to the left of this area where you are currently working—such as page templates, adding an app, deleting pages, changing the layout, colour or theme.



*You're almost there!*



Change site layout

Configure search

Sidebar

Display

on the left

on the right

Width:  pixels

You have now changed the width of your sidebar so you are ready to work on the organisational structure.

To change the organisation of your sidebar click **edit** under **Navigation**. A new window will open.

This window will allow you to change the order of pages, and move them left or right on the sidebar.

To begin editing the organisation of your sidebar untick **Automatically organise my navigation**.

When you've unticked the box the screen will change. This is where you will add and move pages.

#### Configure Navigation

Title:

Display title

Automatically organize my navigation

Levels of pages to show:

Include a link to:

Sitemap

Recent site activity

OK

Cancel

#### header

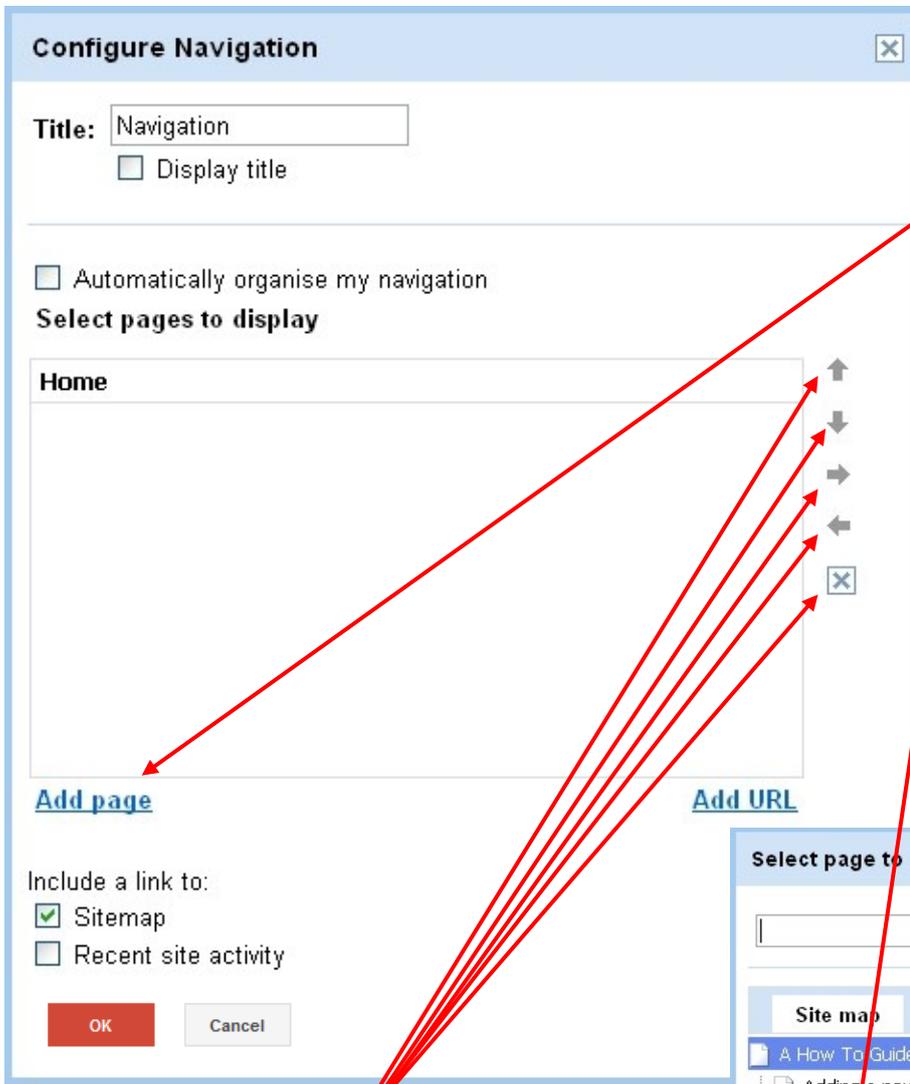
Height: Use theme default - [change logo](#)

Alignment: Standard, Theme Default - [change](#)

#### sidebar:

Width:  pixels

Navigation: [edit](#) | [delete](#)



The new screen will allow you to add existing pages but not to make new pages.

To begin editing your page order click **Add page**. This will open up the Site map which will show all of the pages you have created. Make sure you add all of your existing pages so you may move them around to the position you want them to appear in on your ePortfolio.

**NOTE:** When you have selected a page to add you will have to click **OK** and then **Add page** again to add the next page in your list. This will have to be repeated for every individual page in order for them to show up in your sidebar.

Adding all of the pages to your sidebar to begin customisation is the hard part, from here it's smooth sailing.

The next step is to change the order and location of pages in the sidebar. On the right side of the **Configure Navigation** window you will see four arrows and a little box with an x.

Click on a page to move it to a location. Each time you click an arrow it will move the page location (on the sidebar) one space in the direction of the arrow you clicked.

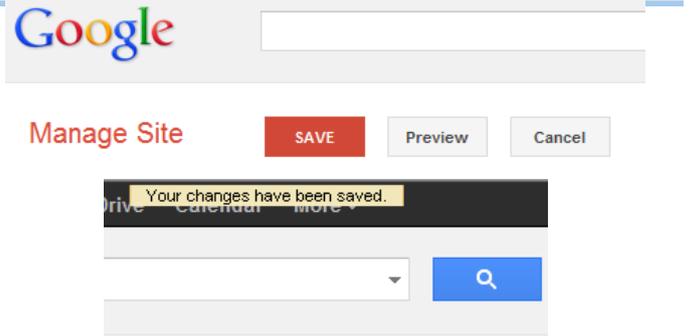
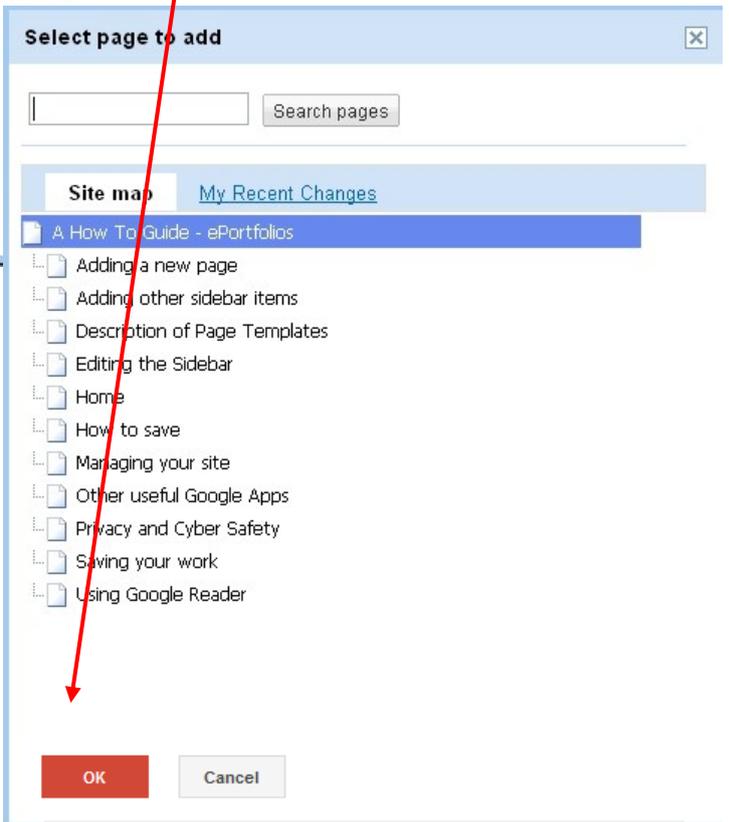
To change the order of a page so that it shows up as a subpage (under a main page) put it directly under the main page and then click the arrow that points to the right one time.

This process may take some time to complete but at least it's fairly straightforward and simple at this stage.

When you have finished organising your pages click **OK** at the bottom of the **Configure Navigation** window, then click.

Now all you need to do is click **Save changes** and then **Return to site**.

**You've made it! You've created an ePortfolio from scratch using Google Sites. Now you're all ready to add the goodies that you've been saving in paper form to this ePortfolio! Congratulations!**



**Make sure that you keep cyber-safety and privacy in mind when you add content to your ePortfolio.**