

USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS

Background:

The ownership and use of personal mobile devices have grown exponentially over the past decade. While personal mobile devices offer potential opportunities for communication, information access and enhanced opportunities for instruction, regulated use of personal mobile devices in schools and the Division is required to ensure the promotion of welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning and working environments. Appropriate use of personal mobile devices contributes to the safety and security of students and staff, minimizes risk to personal wellbeing and disruption to instruction, and protects personal privacy and academic integrity.

Definitions:

Instructional time: includes time scheduled for the purposes of instruction, examinations/testing, and other student activities where direct student-teacher interaction and supervision are maintained.

Non-Instructional time: includes time during the school day where students are not scheduled for the purposes of instruction, examinations/testing and other student activities where direct student-teacher interaction and supervision are maintained. This includes before and after school, breaks and lunch.

Personal mobile device: a personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.

Procedures:

Schools have the right and authority to temporarily confiscate, restrict and/or prohibit personal mobile device usage while individuals are on school property and/or in attendance at school-sponsored activities.

1. Student Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media In Schools

1.1. Divisions 1, 2 and 3 (kindergarten to Grade 9)

- 1.1.1. Students shall not access a personal mobile device at school unless the use, in limited form, is for:
 - 1.1.1.1. a diagnosed health or medical reason(s) where a physician has confirmed the need for use in the school environment; or
 - 1.1.1.2. an individualized educational support as approved by the Administration/School Learning Support Team in consultation with the legal guardian and where appropriate, the student
 - 1.1.2. Personal mobile devices brought to school for a diagnosed health or medical reasons or an identified inclusive-educational need shall be stored in a locker where available or according to the school Personal Mobile Devices
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and Social Media in Schools plan when not required.

- 1.1.3. Students shall not have access to a personal mobile devices during break periods—for example, recess and lunch breaks.

1.2. Division 4 (grades 10 to 12)

- 1.2.1. Students may not access a personal mobile device or social media during instructional time unless given permission by the teacher, after receiving approval by school administration, for a specific educational task or purpose.
- 1.2.2. Personal mobile devices shall not be on the student and shall be stored in a locker unless the limited use is for:
 - 1.2.2.1. a diagnosed health or medical reason(s) where a physician has confirmed the need for use in the school environment; or
 - 1.2.2.2. an individualized educational support as approved by the Administration/School Learning Support Team in consultation with the legal guardian and where appropriate, the student.
- 1.2.3. Personal mobile devices brought to school for a diagnosed health or medical reasons or an identified inclusive-educational need shall be stored in a locker when not required.
- 1.2.4. Students shall have access to a personal mobile devices during break periods only—for example, recess, class breaks, lunch breaks and spares.

1.3. Students

- 1.3.1. Students are expected to conduct themselves to comply with Section 31 of the [Education Act](#).
 - 1.3.2. Personal mobile devices are not to be taken into test or examination settings unless students have been permitted to do so.
 - 1.3.3. Each year the principal shall require all students in grades 4, 7 and 10— as well as all those new to the Division in grades 4 to 12—to complete the [Network Responsible Use Agreement](#).
 - 1.3.4. Students who bring personal mobile devices to the school under the above guidelines are expected to comply with [Administrative Procedure 350: Student Code of Conduct](#). Students who refuse to comply with the Division's policies and procedures for the use of personal mobile devices in the school or during school-sponsored activities may be subject to disciplinary measures.
 - 1.3.5. Personal mobile devices are not to be used in change rooms, washrooms, private counselling rooms or any setting that has the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
 - 1.3.6. Sharing and recording audio, videos and/or photos without explicit consent is prohibited, with the exception of photos and recordings made at public events located on school property.
 - 1.3.7. Confiscation, restrictions and/or prohibition of personal mobile devices may extend to:
 - a. instructional time
 - b. non-instructional time;
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- c. periods of time when students are being transported;
 - d. any school-sponsored trip or activity;
 - e. specific locations within the building or on school property.
- 1.3.8. Personal mobile devices are valuable electronic devices. Students bring personal mobile devices to school at their own risk. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner and user. The Division assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of personal mobile devices. Owners and users of personal mobile devices who bring and use their devices in contravention of this policy are accepting the risk that their devices may be confiscated.

2. Staff

- 2.1.** Staff are expected to follow the school Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools plan which aligns with Board Policies and Administrative Procedures.
- 2.2.** All Division employees serve as role models and as such, must only use personal mobile devices as outlined in Board policies and administrative procedures to ensure the promotion of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environments.
- 2.3.** The Associate Superintendent of Human & Learning Services shall ensure all new staff, sign the [Network Responsible Use Agreement](#) upon hire. Division employees who bring personal mobile devices to school shall comply with [AP 140: Information and Communication Technology](#), [AP 142 Electronic Social Media](#), and [AP 143 Information Security](#).
- 2.4.** As personal mobile devices can be a distraction in the workplace, all Division employees are asked to leave cellphones at their desk or in a secure place. Division employees should only use personal mobile devices for defined educational and work purposes or during scheduled break and lunch periods. In the event a personal mobile device is necessary, it shall be carried on silent mode or vibrate mode.
- 2.5.** Division employees are expected to exercise the same discretion when using personal mobile devices as they do when using Division devices.
- 2.6.** Staff who refuse to comply with the Division's procedures for the use of personal mobile devices in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary measures.
- 2.7.** Personal mobile devices are not to be used in change rooms, washrooms, private counselling rooms or any setting that has the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.

3. Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a vital role in developing student behaviour and conduct. It is LRSD's expectation that a parent/guardian of a student has the responsibility to comply with Section 32 of the Education Act specifically to:

- 3.1. take an active role in the student's educational success including assisting the student in complying with Section 31 of the [Education Act](#);
 - 3.2. ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning and working environment;
 - 3.3. assist the school in addressing disciplinary issues involving their child;
 - 3.4. comply with Administrative Procedure 132 – Public Civility in Schools.
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4. Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media Plan

- 4.1.** The Superintendent requires principals, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders such as school councils, to formulate and implement procedures at their school site consistent with the Division's requirements. Each school shall develop a Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools plan using the Division template provided that addresses the following:
- 4.1.1 how personal mobile devices will be stored at the school;
 - 4.1.2 which social media platforms will be restricted from school networks and devices;
 - 4.1.3 the specific progression of disciplinary measures to be implemented to address infractions, including how parents will be notified if the student violates the Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools plan;
and
 - 4.1.4 the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, staff and school administration.

August 2024

Reference:

Section 31, 32, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 *Education Act*

Alberta Education Guide to Education

Ministerial Order #014/2024 Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools
