

USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS

Background

Personal mobile devices (PMDs) offer significant opportunities for communication, information access, and enhanced instruction. To ensure a positive and productive atmosphere for students and staff, regulated use of personal communication devices in schools and the Division is required. Clear guidelines and expectations are necessary to promote respectful learning and working environments. Appropriate use of personal communication devices contributes to the safety and security of students and staff, minimizes risks to well-being, reduces disruptions to learning, and protects privacy and academic integrity.

This procedure provides a balance of the educational benefits of personal mobile devices and social media with the need to minimize distractions and safeguard the overall well-being of the learning environment and school community.

Definitions

Personal Mobile Devices (PMDs): Any electronic device that can be used to communicate, access the internet or share captured images and videos online, including but not limited to smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, earbuds and laptops.

Social Media: Online platforms that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and each other, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.

Instructional Time: Scheduled class time or during school-supervised curricular activities.

Out of sight: PMDs must be stored in locations away from an individual's workstations, such as lockers, bags, backpacks, etc.

Procedures

1. Student use of Personal Mobile Devices

- 1.1 During instructional time, all personal mobile devices must be turned off and stored out of sight unless a teacher explicitly allows their use for educational purposes.
- 1.2 PMDs are not to be used in change rooms, washrooms, or any setting that has the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
- 1.3 Each school will develop rules and expectations for PMD use during non-instructional time (i.e., before and after school, lunch breaks, etc.).

- 1.4 The Division will not provide internet access for PMDs when used for non-educational purposes.
- 1.5 When allowed to do so, students are expected to use PMDs responsibly, with respect for the rights and privacy of others.

2. Use of Social Media

- 2.1 Student PMDs will not have access to social media on wireless school networks.
- 2.2 The use of social media by students and staff during instructional time is only permitted for educational purposes under the supervision of a teacher or staff member, who must also ensure that students maintain high privacy settings and are aware of the risks associated with online interactions.
- 2.3 Social media platforms should not be used to discuss sensitive, emotional, or highly confidential issues. Such matters should be addressed through direct communication.
- 2.4 All users must adhere to the Division's standards of conduct when using social media, including showing respect, protecting privacy, and not engaging in bullying, harassment, or defamation.

3. Enforcement and Compliance

- 3.1 School staff, including teachers and administrators, have the authority to confiscate personal mobile devices when their use violates this procedure or if they are being used inappropriately.
- 3.2 Progressive disciplinary actions for non-compliance with this procedure will be in accordance with the school's discipline policy and may include temporary confiscation of devices, parent/guardian meetings, or other appropriate measures.
- 3.3 In cases where the use of a personal mobile device or social media results in bullying, harassment, or any form of harm to others, more severe disciplinary measures will be taken, which may include suspension or involvement of law enforcement.

4. Protection of Property and Privacy

- 4.1 The Division assumes no responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage of personal mobile devices brought to school by students or staff.
- 4.2 Confiscated devices must be turned off prior to confiscation and will be stored in a secure location by school staff.

5. Staff use of Personal Mobile Devices

- 5.1 All Division employees serve as role models and must use PMDs in accordance with Board policies and administrative procedures to promote caring and respectful learning environments.

6. Limited Use Exception

- 6.1 Limited use of PMDs is permitted, as determined by a school administrator, for a diagnosed medical condition or an identified special education need with supporting documentation in the Individual Support Plan (ISP).

7. Division Schools will

- 7.1 Ensure this Administrative Procedure 144 - USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS is communicated to all staff, students, parents and volunteers at the beginning of each school year and ensure its adherence.
- 7.2 Ensure staff members apply it consistently when working with students.
- 7.3 Develop a plan detailing the specific curricular circumstances that a PMD can be used in class.
- 7.4 Establish how PMDs will be safely stored at the school.

Reference: Ministerial Order #014/2024
Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
AP-140 Digital Citizenship – Technology Use
AP-145 Student Use of Electronic Devices in Schools
AP-146 Social Media