



XXXX: Acceptable Use of Cellular Phones, Smart Watches, and Electronic Devices: Usage in Schools, on School Property or During School Related Activities (A/P)

Approved 09 04 24

BACKGROUND

On January 26, 2024, the Premier of British Columbia and the Minister of Education jointly announced a suite of initiatives focused on keeping students safe, including regulating the use of cell phones in schools, particularly during times of instruction or learning related activity.

The district encourages responsible use of technologies and other forms of electronic communication to support learning, for school district business and communication purposes. While the appropriate use of technology, including cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices for students and staff plays an important role in communication, and may enhance student learning opportunities, these devices should work in partnership with requirements for safety, security, and privacy for students and staff while supporting the purpose of school operations.

Student use of technology, including cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices will be at the discretion of the supervising staff. It is generally expected that use of these digital devices will be extremely limited in the elementary years, gradually increasing into the secondary years of study when appropriate. While the use of technology in the instructional setting is regulated, it is recognized that some students require technological supports as detailed in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by classroom teachers, specialist teachers, and administration.

PURPOSE

The intention of these procedures and guiding Policy XXX: Acceptable Use of Cellular Phones, Smart Watches, and Electronic Devices: Usage in Schools, on School Property or During School Related Activities, is to: create space for focused learning and positive interpersonal connection in the classroom with fewer distractions and interruption; support students with learning how to use cell phones, smart watches, and electronic devices responsibly and respectfully; and, help keep students safe from online threats and harmful impacts of social media.

DEFINITIONS

Data – includes, but is not limited to, student records, employee records, confidential, personal, or professional information and communications, or any other electronically stored information that passes through or is stored electronically on School District technology resources.

District Networks - includes, but is not limited to, access to the School District's wired and wireless network from any location, such as schools, workplaces, home, or other off-site locations; District-provisioned software and applications, including cloud-based resources.



Instructional time – includes not just regular classroom settings, but outdoor learning experiences, assemblies, guest speakers, field trips, and other events organized by supervising staff or administrators.

Personally owned electronic devices – refers to the practice of enabling students to bring personally owned devices such as cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices to school for the sole purpose of educational or instructional use.

REGULATIONS

1. The use of technology, including cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices, within school settings is regulated during instructional time unless permission is granted by the supervising staff for instructional purposes.
 - i. The use of cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices may be used during non-instructional times including before class, during breaks, lunch period, and after school.
2. Online activities related to a school are an extension of the classroom and subject to all school and district expectations. Student online activity and use of electronic devices should reflect their school and/or district Code of Conduct.
3. Students must be reminded that photos/videos of any kind cannot be taken without the permission of the person being photographed or recorded. Cameras/recorders must never be used in areas such as washrooms, changerooms, or private counselling areas in respect to a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
4. Use of cellular phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices during quizzes, tests, exams, and other assessment is prohibited unless students have been given permission for use by the supervising staff member.
5. During instructional time, cellular phones and electronic devices should remain in lockers, or in backpacks or purses, and be turned off or in silent mode. Cellular phones should not remain on the student's person and smart watches should not be connected to the cellular phone.
6. Students will take full responsibility for any personally owned device and will appropriately secure all devices when not in use. Cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices are valuable. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The district or school assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement of these items.
7. Students should report any content or inappropriate electronic behaviour through use of school-related technologies or data sources that is not suitable for the school environment.
8. District management reserves the right to access all files and content on personally owned electronic devices connected to district networks to check for inappropriate use. This means by connecting to district networks with personally owned electronic devices, IT staff has permission to access information on that device.
9. Students that contravene Policy XXX: Acceptable Use of Cellular Phones, Smart Watches, and Electronic Devices: Usage in Schools, on School Property or During School Related Activities may be subject to



10. disciplinary action including temporary confiscation of the cell phone, smart watch, and other electronic device by the supervising staff member or school administrator. Temporarily confiscated items shall be returned to the student only after a conference with the parent, student, and school personnel.
11. Serious student violations of these regulations or the school guidelines may be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and may also be subject to criminal investigation and/or criminal charge.

PROCEDURES

1. School guidelines will reference the district policy and administrative procedures and will be posted in the School Codes of Conduct for students, parents/guardians, and staff to review.
 - i. Principals, in consultation with staff and appropriate stakeholders, including PAC's and Rights Holder representatives, will formulate and implement specific guidelines at each site.
2. For incoming and outgoing communication that require an immediate response, such as emergencies, schools will outline specific guidelines in their annual School Handbook updates for students, parents/guardians, and staff to review.
3. Supervising staff are responsible for the overall management and supervision of student use of technology resources.
4. Cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices which are temporarily confiscated from students by supervising staff or administrators must be securely stored.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Boundary School District – Regulation No. 3035: Technology – Personally Owned Electronic Devices

Cowichan Valley School District – Administrative Procedure 145 – Use of Personal Digital Devices (PDD)

Gold Trail School District – Operational Procedure 3.250: Cellular Phones, Communication and/or Listening Devices; Usage in or on School Property

Mission Public Schools – DRAFT Use of Technology by Students Policy 3.8

Province of British Columbia News Release (January 29, 2024): [B.C. Launches Concrete Actions to Keep Kids Safe, Healthy.](#)

Qualicum School District – CEAP Secondary Cell-Phone Use Policy

Rocky Mountain School District – District Policy 2700 – Acceptable Use of Digital Technology
- District Practice 2700.2: Student Acceptable Use of Digital Technology