

## USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES

### Background:

The ownership and use of a personal mobile device (PMD) has grown exponentially over the past decade. While personal devices offer potential opportunities for communication, information access and enhanced opportunities for instruction, personal mobile devices can also be a source of distraction that can negatively impact children's and students' mental health, engagement and learning. Regulated use of personal mobile devices in schools and throughout 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:

#### Personal mobile device:

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

### Procedures:

#### 1. Student Use of PMDs

##### 1.1. Divisions 1 and 2 (kindergarten to Grade 6)

1.1.1. Students shall not access a PMD at school unless documentation is provided to the Principal or designate that confirms the use is for:

1.1.1.1. a diagnosed health or medical condition; or

1.1.1.2. an identified special learning need.

1.1.2. Each school shall develop a plan for the storage of PMDs.

1.1.3. PMDs brought to school for a diagnosed health or medical condition or an identified special learning need shall be stored according to the school PMD plan when not required.

1.1.3.1. If PMDs are stored within the classroom, they must be on silent or powered off and stored out of view of students.

1.1.4. Students shall not have access to a PMD during break periods—for example, recess, class breaks and lunch breaks.

1.1.5. All use of social media, as defined in [Administrative Procedure 146: Social Media](#), on Division networks and devices is prohibited.

##### 1.2. Division 3 (grades 7 to 9)

1.2.1. Students shall not access a PMD unless given permission by the teacher for a specific educational task or purpose.

1.2.2. PMDs shall not be on the student unless documentation has been provided to the Principal or designate that confirms the use is for:

1.2.2.1. a diagnosed health or medical condition; or

- 1.2.2.2. an identified special learning need.
- 1.2.3. Each school shall develop a plan for the storage—locker, classroom pouches—and educational use of PMDs.
  - 1.2.3.1. If PMDs are stored within the classroom, they must be on silent or powered off and stored out of view of students.
- 1.2.4. Students shall have access to a PMD during break periods only—for example, class breaks and lunch breaks.
- 1.2.5. All use of social media, as defined in [Administrative Procedure 146: Social Media](#), on Division networks and devices is prohibited.
- 1.3. **Division 4** (grades 10 to 12)
  - 1.3.1. Students shall not access a PMD unless given permission by the teacher for a specific educational task or purpose.
  - 1.3.2. PMDs shall not be on the student unless documentation has been provided to the Principal or designate that confirms the use is for:
    - 1.3.2.1. a diagnosed health or medical condition; or
    - 1.3.2.2. an identified special learning need.
  - 1.3.3. Each school shall develop a plan for the storage—locker, classroom pouches—and educational use of PMDs.
    - 1.3.3.1. If PMDs are stored within the classroom, they must be on silent or powered off and stored out of view of students.
  - 1.3.4. Students shall have access to a PMD during break periods only—for example, class breaks, lunch breaks and spares.
  - 1.3.5. All use of social media, as defined in [Administrative Procedure 146: Social Media](#), on Division networks and devices is prohibited.
- 1.4. **Students General**
  - 1.4.1. PMDs shall not be taken into test or examination settings.
  - 1.4.2. PMDs shall not 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.
  - 1.4.3. Students who bring PMDs to the school under the above guidelines are expected to comply with [Administrative Procedure 140: Responsible Use and Security of Information Technologies](#) and [Administrative Procedure 350: Student Code of Conduct](#), which are provided to students and parents/guardians on an annual basis. Students who refuse to comply with the Division's procedures for the use of PMDs in the school setting shall be subject to progressive disciplinary measures as outlined in Administrative Procedure 350, Section 2 “Consequences of Unacceptable Behaviour.” In such instances, parents/guardians will be notified and expected to reinforce appropriate behaviour. If repeated violation of the appropriate use of PMDs occurs, students may have their device confiscated and be banned from bringing PMDs to school.
  - 1.4.4. PMDs are valuable electronic devices. Students bring PMDs to school at their own risk. The Division assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of PMDs. Owners and users of PMDs

who bring and use their devices in contravention of this Administrative Procedure are accepting the risk their devices may be confiscated.

## 2. Staff Conduct

- 2.1. All Division employees serve as role models and, as such, must only use PMDs as outlined in Board policies and administrative procedures to ensure the promotion of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments.
- 2.2. The Associate Superintendent of Human Resources shall ensure all new staff, contractors and volunteers sign the [Staff, Contractor, Volunteer Responsible Technology Use Agreement](#) (Form 140-2).
- 2.3. Division employees who bring PMDs to school shall comply with [Administrative Procedure 140: Responsible Use and Security of Information Technologies](#) and [Administrative Procedure 141: Mobile Device Security](#).
- 2.4. As PMDs can be a distraction in the workplace, all Division employees are asked to leave devices at their desk or in a secure place. Division employees should only use PMDs for defined educational and work purposes or during scheduled break and lunch periods.
- 2.5. In the event a PMD is necessary, it shall be carried on silent mode or vibrate mode.
- 2.6. Division employees are expected to exercise the same discretion when using PMDs as they do when using Division devices. Excessive personal use during the workday, regardless of the device used, can interfere with teaching, learning and working environments.
- 2.7. PMDs shall not 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.
- 2.8. Staff who refuse to comply with the Division's procedures for the use of PMDs in the school or department setting may be subject to disciplinary measures.

## 3. Principals shall:

- 3.1. formally review and communicate the Division's Administrative Procedure regarding PMDs with staff, students and parents/guardians annually;
- 3.2. approve appropriate use of PMDs for health or medical reasons and/or to support special learning needs;
- 3.3. develop a PMD plan, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders such as school councils, that addresses the following:
  - 3.3.1. the educational circumstances that a PMD can be used in the class:
    - 3.3.1.1. to enable the student to achieve the learner outcomes in the Alberta programs of students; and
    - 3.3.1.2. to participate in learner activities chosen by the teacher;
  - 3.3.2. how PMDs will be stored while at school; and
  - 3.3.3. the specific progression of disciplinary measures to address infractions, including communication with parents/guardians;
- 3.4. review and communicate the school PMD plan with staff, students and parents/guardians annually; and
- 3.5. make the PMD plan readily accessible on the school website for the school community and public.

4. The Superintendent shall:
  - 4.1. ensure principals, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders such as school councils, formulate and implement PMD plans at their school sites and make them readily available to the school community and public.
5. Parents/guardians will:
  - 5.1. support schools in the administration of Administrative Procedure 145: Personal Mobile Devices and Ministerial Order 014/2024;
  - 5.2. annually at the start of each school year—or as needed throughout the school year for families that enrol in the Division mid-year—acknowledge they’ve read and reviewed [Appendix 140-B: Student Responsible Technology Use](#) and [Administrative Procedure 350: Student Code of Conduct](#) with their child; and
  - 5.3. recognize that students will be unable to communicate using PMDs during instructional time. For critical communication or emergencies, contact the school office.

**Reference:**

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

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