

School Operations

Administrative Procedure #226 Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools

The Board recognizes that as a STEM School we must enable students to access appropriate technology to support and enhance student learning. Furthermore, the Board recognizes that some regulated use of personal and school owned devices is required to support maintaining a safe, caring and welcoming environment.

In June 2024, the Minister of Education (Alberta) made a Ministerial Order requiring all school authorities in the Province of Alberta to develop and adopt policy and or administrative procedures outlining the appropriate use of personal mobile devices in schools. As noted in the Ministerial Order (#014/2024), "personal mobile devices can be a source of distraction that can negatively impact children's and student's mental health, engagement and learning.

The following administrative procedure outlines expectations for students and staff regarding the acceptable use of personal mobile devices in school.

Definition of Personal Mobile Device (Source: *Ministerial Order #014/2024*)

- a. Personal Mobile Device means any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cell phone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.
- b. Social Media – Social media refers to online platforms and apps where people can create, share, and interact with content. This includes popular services like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok, where users can post pictures, videos, messages, and more. These platforms are used to connect with friends, family, and communities, but they also require responsible use, especially in a school setting.

Procedures:

- 1) Students choosing to bring a personal mobile device to school chooses to do this at their own risk. Thrive Elementary Charter School accepts no liability or responsibility for lost, broken or stolen personal mobile devices.

- 1) Students who choose to bring a personal mobile device to school must ensure that the device is on silent or powered off, and is not connected to the school's Wifi.
- 2) The use of personal mobile devices is restricted at all times during the school day including:
 - a. Instructional Time; Recess;
 - b. Thrive Time; and
 - c. Field Trips.
- 3) Exception to 1), 2) and 3) may be made by the school principal in cases where the device is used to track or monitor health information or to support special learning needs. Request for exemptions must be made to the School Principal and include a note from your family physician outlining the health matter and why access is required. The Principal may also provide limited permissions to use the personal mobile device but will provide clear instructions about what this limited exemption provides for.
- 4) Parents requesting exemption to the restricted use of personal mobile devices for their children who require health monitoring must meet with the school principal to discuss the required responsibilities that accompany this exception.
- 5) Students in possession of a personal mobile device must have the device set on silent or powered off, and stored out of view during instructional or Thrive Time.
- 6) Storage of personal mobile devices must be out of view of all students. Students may choose to store their personal mobile device in their backpack, in their jacket and book storage area located in their classroom, at the school office or with their classroom teacher.
- 7) Staff may provide authorization for students to use their personal mobile devices for instructional and learning activities. However, personal mobile devices cannot be used in:
 - a. Change rooms: and
 - b. Washrooms.
- 9) Restricted use of personal mobile devices, when permitted by staff members, shall not include any of the following:
 - a. Taking pictures of any students or staff without their permission;
 - b. Connecting to social media sites including but not limited to Instagram and Facebook; and
 - c. Connecting to any inappropriate (as defined in the Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement) or adult content sites.

- 1) The school shall use a progressive discipline approach to assist students in understanding the expected standards for the use of personal mobile devices and social media at school. Progressive discipline includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a. Temporary confiscation of the personal mobile device. In this instance any temporarily confiscated personal mobile device must be stored in the school office;
 - b. Restriction from bringing a personal mobile device to school for a period of time or for the remainder of the school year;
 - c. Detention;
 - d. Suspension and or expulsion; and
 - e. Parents will be notified by the teacher and or Principal when the student does not fulfill the requirements of this administrative procedure.
- 2) Staff shall not use personal mobile devices during instructional time unless it is for instructional purposes.
- 3) Parents and school visitors shall not use personal mobile devices in the classrooms, washrooms or change rooms. Parents and school visitors should limit, as much as possible, their use of personal mobile devices while in the school or on school property.

Roles and Responsibilities

- 1) Staff Responsibilities
 - a. Enforcement and Monitoring:
 - i. Ensure that students are complying with the policy during school hours, including monitoring the use of personal mobile devices in classrooms, hallways, and common areas.
 - ii. Report any policy violations to the school administration and follow the outlined progressive discipline procedures.
 - b. Authorization of Device Use:
 - i. Provide clear instructions and boundaries when authorizing the use of personal mobile devices for instructional purposes.
 - ii. Ensure that devices are not used in restricted areas, such as change rooms and washrooms.
 - c. Communication with Parents:
 - i. Notify parents promptly if their child violates the policy, explaining the nature of the infraction and the consequences.

- ii. Work with parents to address any ongoing issues or requests for exceptions to the policy.
- d. Modeling Appropriate Behavior:
 - i. Staff should model appropriate use of technology by adhering to the policy themselves, especially in terms of not using personal devices during instructional time unless necessary for educational purposes.

2) Student Responsibilities

- a. Compliance with the Policy:
 - i. Keep personal mobile devices on silent or powered off and stored out of view during school hours, except when authorized by staff.
 - ii. Refrain from accessing social media platforms or inappropriate websites on school premises.
- b. Respect for Privacy:
 - i. Do not take photos, videos, or audio recordings of other students or staff without their permission.
- c. Responsibility for Personal Devices:
 - i. Understand that bringing a personal mobile device to school is done at their own risk and that the school is not responsible for lost, broken, or stolen devices.
- d. Seeking Permission for Exceptions:
 - i. If a student needs to use a device for health, medical, or educational reasons, they must seek permission from the school principal, with appropriate documentation if required.

3) Parent Responsibilities

- a. Support Compliance:
 - i. Encourage and support your child in following the school's policy on personal mobile devices and social media use.
 - ii. Ensure that your child understands the consequences of policy violations.
- b. Requesting Exceptions:
 - i. If your child requires an exception to the policy for health, medical, or educational reasons, meet with the school principal to discuss and provide any necessary documentation.
- c. Monitoring and Education at Home:

- i. Educate your child on the responsible use of technology and the potential risks of social media.
- ii. Monitor your child's use of mobile devices and social media to ensure they are using these tools safely and appropriately.

4) Administrative Responsibilities

a. Policy Implementation and Communication:

- i. Ensure that the policy is clearly communicated to students, staff, and parents at the start of each school year and as needed throughout the year.
- ii. Provide training or resources to staff on enforcing the policy and handling exceptions.

b. Handling Exceptions and Discipline:

- i. Review and approve any requests for exceptions to the policy, documenting the reasons and any specific conditions.
- ii. Oversee the progressive discipline process, ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.

c. Policy Review and Updates:

- i. Regularly review the effectiveness of the policy and recommend updates as needed, taking into account feedback from the school community and changes in technology or regulations.

5) General Expectations

a. Respect and Responsibility:

- i. All members of the school community are expected to respect the policy and contribute to a safe, caring, and focused learning environment.

b. Open Communication:

- i. Encourage open lines of communication between students, parents, and staff to address any concerns or questions about the policy and its implementation.

References:

Education Act

Ministerial Order 014/2024