

USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES (PCDs)

Background

Embracing new and emerging technologies, along with their educational applications, can enhance the instructional process by offering numerous constructive opportunities. Additionally, the regulated use of personal communication devices (e.g. cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch) within schools and the community can contribute to the safety and security of both students and staff. However, without proper regulation, these devices may pose risks to personal safety, disrupt instruction, invade privacy, or undermine academic integrity.

Ministerial Order (#14/ 2024) - Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Alberta schools:

General Restrictions:

A school authority is required to, at a minimum, limit the use of personal mobile devices and restrict access to social media as follows:

Children and students may not use personal mobile devices during instructional time. If children and students have personal mobile devices with them during instructional time, they are required to keep these devices on silent or powered off, and stored out of view; and

Children and students may not access social media on school networks or on school devices.

Procedures

1. Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) are not to be operated by students during regularly scheduled instructional time, or during any school-sponsored activity, such as an assembly or talk by a guest speaker, unless such use is approved by the Principal or equivalent to facilitate learning activities.
 - 1.1 Normally, PCDs are to be stored in an approved location in compliance with the school code of conduct.
 - 1.2 Students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 are encouraged to leave their PCDs at home
 - 1.3 Should a student at any grade level choose to bring their device to school, it must remain on silent mode and out of sight for the entire school day following school policy on PCD storage.
2. PCDs are not to be taken into test or examination settings, unless students have been given permission to do so by explicit instruction of a school administrator. (i.e as outlined in an IPP.)
3. PCDs are not to be used in settings such as change rooms, washrooms, private counseling rooms, that have the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
4. Students who bring PCDs to the school are expected to comply with all parts of

Administrative Procedure 350 (Student Code of Conduct). Students who consistently refuse to comply with the District's procedures for use of PCDs in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary measures detailed in the school's handbook or discipline policy and the steps outlined in Administrative Procedure 350 (Student Code of Conduct).

5. The Principal or designate may authorize a specific use of a PCD during the school day (e.g. laptop use for classwork).
6. The Superintendent requires Principals in consultation with appropriate stakeholders (including School Councils) to formulate and implement procedures at the school site and included in the school code of conduct.
 - 6.1 The Student Code of Conduct includes progressive consequences for Non-compliance
 - 6.2 The updated School Code of Conduct is communicated with staff, students, and families.
7. In the event of an emergency, such as a lockdown or an evacuation, the Principal will develop and inform the school community of the acceptable use of PCDs in that emergency situation.
8. PCDs are valuable electronic devices. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner or user. The District assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of PCDs.
 - 8.1 PCDs that are taken temporarily from students by support staff, teachers or administrators must be securely stored.
9. Each year, STAR Catholic School Division will review Administrative Procedure 141: Social Media and Administrative Procedure 351: Use of Personal Communication Devices, with school administrators during August leadership meetings. Principals will then ensure these procedures are communicated to staff during year-opening meetings and to parents and guardians through the school's first school-wide communication of the year, as part of the implementation of the School Code of Conduct in alignment with Ministerial Order #14/2024.

Additional Resources

- [Ministerial Order \(#014/2024\) – Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools](#)
- [Cellphone use in schools engagement webpage](#)
- [Education Act](#)
- [Professional practice standards](#)
- [Guide to Education](#)
- [Learning and Technology Policy Framework](#)
- [Attachment #1 Checklists for Development of School Code of Conduct](#)
- [Attachment # 2 Research Information: Research Related to the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media](#)