
POLICY 3.4 STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICES

The Board expects a learning environment with limited distractions and the responsible use of digital technology during instructional hours. This policy is consistent with current published research and evidence recognizing the negative impacts of cell phones and social media on student mental health and academic performance.

The district will develop restrictions, programming, and procedures for student use of digital devices at school to promote online safety and focused learning environments.

Guidelines

1. "*Personal Digital Device*" means any personal electronic device, such as a cell phone or tablet, that can be used to communicate or access the Internet.
2. All students will have access to school/district-owned technology at an age-appropriate level that supports learning, the development of digital technology skills, and digital citizenship.
3. As outlined in an Individual Education Plan (IEP), schools will exempt specific students from restrictions on the use of personal digital devices when:
 - 3.1. they are needed to support student accessibility and accommodation needs;
 - 3.2. they are needed for full inclusion in a specific learning activity to help ensure equity to support learning outcomes.
 - 3.3. A personal digital device is needed for students' medical and health needs.
4. Using personal cell phones and other digital devices, including smart watches or other smart communication technology, are not permitted in elementary schools during the school day.
5. The use of personal cell phones and other digital devices, including smart watches or other smart communication technology, is not permitted during instructional times¹ in secondary schools but may be used during non-instructional times including before class, during breaks, lunchtime, and after school. At the *teacher's discretion*, an exemption may be made when using such devices to support a specific curricular objective, which is part of instructional planning.

¹ Instructional time includes not only regular classroom settings but also assemblies, guest speakers, field trips, and other events organized by teachers or administrators.



6. Digital devices are not to be taken into test or examination settings unless students have been permitted to do so by the teacher administering the test or exam for educational and/or medical reasons.
7. Students must not use cell phones, video or audio recording devices, or other digital devices at any time in settings such as change rooms, washrooms, or private counselling rooms that could potentially violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
8. The security and storage of personal digital devices are the sole responsibility of their owners/users. The district assumes no responsibility for such devices' safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement.
9. All schools are expected to incorporate the intent of this policy into their codes of conduct.