

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Background

Northwest School Division recognizes the value of educational technology towards improving student learning. Technology, including cell phones, can and should support our vision where all learners “feel safe, have a sense of belonging and are inspired to achieve their greatest potential”.

This document is intended to provide direction to schools regarding the use of cell phones and personal technology in ways that support our strategic goals.

For the purposes of this procedure, the term Personal Electronic Devices includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, tablets, smart watches and portable video game systems.

Procedures

1. Personal technology shall be stored out of view and on silent mode during instructional time in all K-12 classes within Northwest School Division.
2. Schools should collaboratively develop expectations and a plan for the use of cell phones and assigned technology in classrooms, and the school, that support student learning and assessment.
3. Teachers of students in Grades 9 to 12 who identify a specific instructional purpose for students to use personal electronic devices in their classroom may request and gain permission from the principal.
4. The school plan, with feedback from students and the SCC, etc., should include a continuum of possible steps taken when expectations are not being met, beginning with individual reminders, and moving toward general prohibition (perhaps temporary) in the classroom or possibly in the school.
5. All classroom management plans shall be approved by school administration and incorporate the principles of responsible use and distraction management for students. The classroom management plan should include:
 - a) clearly defined expectations of what constitutes appropriate use and consequences of misuse;
 - b) digital citizenship and responsible use best practices;
 - c) distraction management strategies; and
 - d) parent communication that outlines the intended use of cell phones.

6. Exemptions approved by the school principal may be made when the device is required for specific medical conditions or for documented accommodations related to additional needs. This exemption will require supporting documentation related to medical or educational accommodations.
7. The school is not responsible for students' personal electronic devices in the event of loss, damage or theft.
8. This administrative procedure will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with ministry policy, as well as current legislation and regulations.
9. Schools and classrooms will publicly communicate expectations and plans for cell phone and technology use that include the possible continuum of steps that will be taken to ensure a safe and successful learning environment for all.
10. Teachers assigning technology-based instruction should ensure that students are directed in the appropriate use of technology and regularly supervised to ensure expectations are being met.
11. Staff should model the established expectations of the school/classroom plan.
12. Schools are encouraged to regularly assess the impact of cell phones and technology.
13. Schools may sometimes find it necessary to impose a general cell phone ban in response to a critical incident at the school or within the community.
14. A school can take disciplinary action if expectations and compliance with the plan are not being met.

Reference: Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Digital Citizenship in Saskatchewan Schools, 2015.
Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Personal Electronic Devices Responsible Use in Schools, Policy Guidelines and Model Administrative Procedure, 2024

Lloydminster Public School Division, Saskatoon Public School Division and Prairie Spirit School Division recognized as sources.

Approved: January 13, 2025