

USE OF CELL PHONES AND DIGITAL DEVICES

Background

The District believes that when properly used and supervised cell phones and other personal digital devices can play a vital communication role and can enhance the educational environment for students. The use of devices in the classroom will be for instructional and medical purposes only and will be available at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

The District believes that research shows that frequent cellphone interruption in the classroom, social media platforms with addictive algorithms and predators who seek to exploit young people all present significant risks to young people. Studies have found that children's mental health and physical safety can suffer as a result of body-image distortion, cyberbullying, images shared without consent and disturbing instances of sextortion.

The District believes that the technology of personal devices is constantly changing and that the definitions of cell phones and personal digital devices is meant to encompass any personal cellular communication devices that may access the internet, whether in physical phone or tablet form or not. Other current examples include ear-based and wrist-based cellular devices.

Procedures

1. Students:

- 1.1. Students may carry cell phones or other digital devices and may use them as follows:
 - 1.1.1. Cell phones and other digital devices may be used during non-instructional times only. Non-instructional times would include: before class, during breaks, during lunchtime and after school.
 - 1.1.2. Cell phones and other digital devices will not be used in change rooms or washrooms at any time.
 - 1.1.3. The use of digital devices will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher.
- 1.2. Violation of this Administrative Procedure may result in disciplinary action being taken and confiscation of the cell phone or digital device by the classroom teacher or school administration. Cell phone violations and inappropriate usages are contained within school and District Codes of Conduct.
- 1.3. Students are not permitted to have cell phones or other digital devices with them during instructional times.
 - 1.3.1. Cell phones or other digital devices should be either not brought to the classroom at all, or with teacher permission, be housed away from the student in classrooms at the Middle or Secondary levels.
 - 1.3.2. Cell phones, with teacher permission, may be housed in a central location in the classroom and accessed only within the following few parameters:

- 1.3.2.1. Classroom teachers may grant permission for students at the Middle and Secondary levels to access housed devices for approved instructional purposes, including digital literacy. Elementary students are not to access their own digital devices for instructional purposes.
 - 1.3.2.2. This usage should be reflective of the developmental age of the students.
 - 1.3.2.3. Classroom or Student Service teachers may grant students to access housed devices for recognized and approved accommodation or accessibility needs.
 - 1.3.2.4. Students, with permission, may access their cell phones or other digital devices for recognized and approved medical health needs.
- 1.4. The expectation is that students are not using cell phone or other digital devices for any other reason beyond these usages as an instructional or medical aid.

2. Staff:

- 2.1. Staff members may use cell phones or other digital devices in the classroom setting as follows:
 - 2.1.1. Cell phones and other digital devices may be used during non-instructional times only. Non-instructional times would include: before class, during breaks, during preparatory times, during lunchtime and after school. During instructional time, all cell phones and other digital devices will be turned off and will be out of sight. Exemptions: District Administration, School Based Principals/Vice-Principals, District Crisis Response Coordinator and First Aid Attendants.
 - 2.1.2. Digital devices may be used during instructional times to support student learning or for approved medical assistance or testing.
 - 2.1.3. Violation of this Administrative Procedure may result in disciplinary actions.
 - 2.1.4. Cell Phones and Driving, both District and Personal Vehicles
 - 2.1.4.1. Cell phone usage for driving must follow all current Provincial and/or Federal regulations.
 - 2.1.5. There are many circumstances, outside of a classroom setting, where teachers, support staff and other supervisors will need personal communication devices for student supervision and/or safety.

Reference: Sections 6, 8, 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
School Regulation 265/89

Approved: October 4, 2005

Revised: February 10, 2009; September 14, 2010; August 15, 2021, September 9, 2021, May 30, 2024