

Administrative Procedure 556: Use of Smartphones/Personal Technology

Background

Light of Christ Catholic School Division recognizes the value of educational technology towards improving student learning. In this context, smartphones/personal technology have the potential to be a powerful complement to the learning environment when aligned with responsible use and digital citizenship.

Purpose

This administrative procedure sets out Light of Christ Catholic School Division's procedures on the use of personal electronic devices in schools.

Definitions

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses and portable video game systems.

Procedures

Personal electronic device usage:

1. Light of Christ Catholic School Division restricts the use of personal electronic devices by students as follows:
 - 1.1 Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 shall not use personal electronic devices during instructional time.
2. 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 superintendent/principal. The request must detail the specific learning objectives that will be met (and how those objectives will be met if a student does not have access to a personal electronic device), subject area, duration of the use, and any other relevant information that will inform the decision.
3. Personal electronic devices owned by students must be turned off or put on silent mode and stored out of view during instructional time except when approved in accordance with clause 2 or if an exemption has been granted in accordance with clause 6.

4. Use of personal electronic devices is prohibited in areas where there is an increased expectation of privacy (e.g., washrooms, changing rooms, private counselling rooms).
5. Prohibited use of personal devices by students on school property, at school events and during school activities includes, but is not limited to:
 - Use that violates federal or provincial laws.
 - Theft of resources, including electronic data theft.
 - Creating, displaying, storing or sending fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful materials.
 - Cyber-bullying or bullying by electronic means.
 - Copying, downloading, transferring, renaming, adding or deleting information protected under copyright law.
 - Electronic transmission or posting of photographic images of a person or persons without permission of the person or persons being photographed, the principal or designate, and where the student is below the age of 18, the consent of the parent/guardian.
6. Exemptions approved by the school superintendent/principal may be made when the device is required for specific medical conditions or for documented accommodations related to additional needs. This requires documentation aligned with Light of Christ Catholic School Division's procedures 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.

Consequences of Inappropriate Usage:

8. Inappropriate use of any electronic communication devices will result in the administration of appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the student code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action up to and including confiscation, detention, suspension or expulsion.
9. Where information that could pertain to issues of safety and/or criminal activity is believed to exist on personal electronic devices, the devices may be accessed, the information reviewed, and the devices may be confiscated for further investigation by the school and/or by police authorities.

Responsibilities:

10. School administration shall:

- 10.1 Ensure all parents/guardians are aware of appropriate behaviour, expectations of staff, students and parents/guardians for the use of personal electronic devices
- 10.2 Administer appropriate disciplinary action aligned with the school code of conduct and Light of Christ Catholic School Division's administrative procedures

11. School based staff shall:

- 11.1 Be aware of the appropriate use expectations and communicate the expectations with students.
- 11.2 Ensure students are aware when personal electronic devices are permitted for academic purposes.
- 11.3 Consistently model and enforce the school's policies and procedures on the use of personal electronic devices.
- 11.4 Teach and model for students' responsible digital citizenship.
- 11.5 Follow school policy in place for usage of cell phones for staff.
- 11.6 Communicate effectively with students to avoid any misunderstandings when they are using their cellphones for a purpose such as safety, to issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or to use multi-factor authentication to access a learning resource.

12. Students shall:

- 12.1 Be aware of and comply with the restrictions placed on the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time.
- 12.2 Understand that compliance with acceptable usage is a condition of usage of personal education devices in the school and be aware of the consequences of non-compliance.
- 12.3 Report misuse of personal electronic devices to the teacher and/or principal.
- 12.4 Be aware of the risks that are associated with the use of personal electronic devices.

13. Parents/Guardians shall:

- 13.1 Be aware of the expectations set out regarding the use of personal electronic devices and the consequences of inappropriate usage of personal electronic devices.
- 13.2 Understand that as students do not have access to their personal electronic devices during instructional time, they will be unable to respond promptly to calls or texts. In case of emergency, parents/guardians will contact the school office.
- 13.3 Be encouraged to reinforce and discuss the policy at home as appropriate, including the risks associated with the use of personal electronic devices and the benefits of a cell phone-free environment.

Communication of this procedure:

14. This procedure will be readily accessible by parents/guardians and students as well as teachers and administrators (i.e., on public websites)
15. The expectations for students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrators, as well as consequences of inappropriate use will be communicated annually.

Revision of this procedure:

16. This administrative procedure will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with ministry policy, as well as current legislation and regulation.

Supporting Documentation

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, *Personal Electronic Devices Responsible Use in Schools, August 2024*