

AP 139 – USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Education has directed all school divisions to ban the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time in kindergarten to grade 12. This procedure is intended to lessen the negative impacts of personal electronic devices in classrooms and support teachers and school staff in promoting safe, effective and welcoming learning environments. The use of personal electronic devices by students in schools has been demonstrated to:

- increase incidents of distraction;
- contribute to problematic social media use;
- affect a student's ability to build connections with their peers;
- be associated with acts of bullying, including cyberbullying; and,
- be associated with a range of behavioural and mental health issues affecting students.ⁱ

DEFINITIONS

1. Personal electronic devices: Personal electronic devices include any privately owned electronic device capable of communication, recording, photography, videography, internet access, data storage, computing or transmitting information. This includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, smart glasses, wearable devices, earbuds, portable gaming systems and other devices with similar capabilities.
2. Instructional time: Instructional time is any time in which pupils of a school are in attendance and under teacher supervision for the purpose of receiving instruction in an educational program, including work-experience programs, parent-teacher-pupil conferences, examinations and other learning activities.
3. Digital citizenship: Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of appropriate and responsible online behaviour.

PROCEDURES

1. Personal electronic devices shall be out of sight and on silent mode during instructional time unless their use has been approved under this procedure. This expectation applies to all personal electronic devices, including wearable devices.
2. Students shall not use personal electronic devices to photograph, audio record, video record, livestream or otherwise capture or transmit information involving students, staff or school activities without authorization. This includes passive, discreet or automated recording or transmission by wearable devices, including smart glasses.
3. Exemptions may be approved by the principal for students who require a personal electronic device for a medical condition, documented accommodation, accessibility requirement, communication support or other identified educational need.
4. In grades 9-12, teachers who wish to use personal electronic devices for a specific instructional purpose with students must request an exemption and gain approval from the principal. The

exemption request must include:

- 4.1. a clear instructional outcome and connection to learning;
 - 4.2. clearly defined expectations of what constitutes appropriate use and consequences of misuse;
 - 4.3. digital citizenship and responsible use best practices;
 - 4.4. distraction management strategies; and
 - 4.5. parent communication that outlines the intended use of personal electronic devices.
5. Principals maintain the right to make decisions about the use of personal electronic devices during non-instructional time (e.g. lunch and recess).
 6. Schools are not responsible for students' personal electronic devices in the event of loss, damage or theft.
 7. Consequences for inappropriate use remain at the discretion of the school.
 8. Responsibilities:

Principal shall:

- ensure awareness of personal electronic device use policies among staff, students, and parents/guardians.
- review and approve exemption requests.

All staff:

- model appropriate use of personal electronic devices, including wearable devices, during instructional time (i.e. multi-factor authentication, instruction, safety and medical, etc.).

Teachers shall:

- be familiar with the personal electronic device administrative procedure and communicate responsible use to students.
- request permission from administration to use devices during instructional time (grades 9-12).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Ministry of Education - Saskatchewan. (2024, August). Personal electronic devices: Responsible use in schools - Policy, guidelines and model administrative procedure.

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Digital Citizenship in Saskatchewan Schools, 2015.

ⁱ *Ministry of Education - Saskatchewan. (2024, August). Personal electronic devices: Responsible use in schools - Policy, guidelines and model administrative procedure.*

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