

## USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES (PCDs)

### Background

Openness to new and future technologies and their educational use create opportunities for many constructive and positive uses that can aid the instructional process. Further, regulated use of some personal communication devices in the school and community may contribute to the safety and security of students and staff. However, unregulated use of personal communication devices may pose a risk to personal safety, disrupt instruction, invade personal privacy, or compromise academic integrity. The Division seeks to regulate the use of personal mobile devices to ensure that their presence in schools aligns with our Catholic values of respect, responsibility, and care for the common good.

*Ministerial Order (#14/ 2024) - Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Alberta schools.*

- 1. Students and Staff are not to be using Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) during instructional time.*
- 2. Access to Social Media will not be permitted on District Networks.*

### Definitions

**Personal Communication Device:** Any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, including, but not limited to cellphones, tablets, smartwatches, earbuds.

**Social Media:** Platforms that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking. Examples include, but are not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, Snapchat, Discord, and similar platforms.

**Instructional Time:** Any period during the school day when students are engaged in learning activities under the supervision of a teacher, excluding breaks and lunch periods.

### Procedures

1. Personal Communication Devices (PCDs) are not to be operated by students during regularly scheduled instructional time, or during any school-sponsored activity, such as an assembly or presentation/talk by a guest speaker, unless such use is approved by the classroom teacher or Principal/designate to facilitate learning activities.
  - 1.1 Normally, PCDs are to be stored in an approved location in compliance with the school code of conduct.

2. PCDs are not to be taken into test or examination settings, unless students have been given permission to do so by explicit instruction of a school administrator. (i.e as outlined in an Individual Support Plan (ISP), medical support plans.)
3. PCDs are not to be used in settings such as change rooms, washrooms, or private counseling rooms, that have the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
4. Students who bring PCDs to the school are expected to comply with all parts of Administrative Procedure 350 - Student Code of Conduct. Students who consistently refuse to comply with the District's procedures for use of PCDs in the school setting may be subject to disciplinary measures detailed in the school's rules and the steps outlined in Administrative Procedure 351 - Student Discipline.
5. The Principal or designate may authorize a specific use of a PCD during the school day.
6. The Superintendent requires Principals in consultation with appropriate stakeholders (including School Councils) to formulate and implement procedures at the school site for inclusion in the School Code of Conduct.
  - 6.1 The Student Code of Conduct includes progressive consequences for non-compliance.
  - 6.2 The updated School Code of Conduct is communicated with staff, students, and families.
7. In the event of an emergency, such as a lockdown or an evacuation, the Principal will develop and inform the school community of the acceptable use of PCDs in that emergency situation.
8. The Principal or designate shall access social media sites for the purpose of promoting school events and / or communication with the school community.
  - 8.1 Staff use of Social Media must comply with Administrative Procedure 146 - Social Media.
9. PCDs are valuable electronic devices. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner or user. The District assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement of PCDs.
  - 9.1 PCDs that are taken temporarily from students by teachers or administrators must be securely stored.

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**References:**

Ministerial Order #014/2024, *Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools*.  
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

### **Additional Resources**

- [Ministerial Order \(#014/2024\) – Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools](#)
- [Cellphone use in schools engagement webpage](#)
- [Education Act](#)
- [Professional practice standards](#)
- [Guide to Education](#)
- [Learning and Technology Policy Framework](#)
- [Checklists for Development of School Code of Conduct](#)

### **Research Related to the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media**

- [Research Information](#)