

PRINCE ALBERT ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 6

POLICY ITEM: Responsible Use of Personal Electronic Devices	CODE: HNI
LEGAL STATUS: #49.25	DATE APPROVED: 24 March 25

Background:

Optimizing learning opportunities and experiences using technology is an integral part of the education process in this century. The Government of Saskatchewan provided a directive to all school divisions to ensure policies and procedures are in place in August 2024 to address the use of Personal Electronic Devices. Many school procedures and practices were already in place to reduce distractions of personal electronic devices while in class. This policy aims to align with the Ministerial Directive and the current and practical strategies.

Policy: *The Board of Education recognizes the value and use of technology for instructional purposes. The Board also believes that reducing distractions in class for students and staff can improve and optimize educational experiences. The Board, therefore, promotes the preventative and supportive approach and responsible use of personal electronic devices. Students and staff are expected to use such personal electronic devices in a legal, ethical, collegial, and non-destructive manner consistent with a spirit of respect and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Prince Albert Catholic School Division and within the laws of Saskatchewan and Canada while at school.*

Definitions:

Personal Electronic Devices – smartphones/personal technology shall imply any personal technology such as, but not limited to, smartphones, wearables, tablets portable devices and any piece of lightweight electronically powered equipment. These devices are typically consumer electronic devices capable of communications, data processing and/or utility. Examples range from hand-held lightweight electronic devices such as tablets, e-readers and smartphones to small devices such as MP3 players, smart watches and electronic toys, head phones and ear buds.

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 provided by the Board of Education.

Digital Citizenship: Digital citizenship can be defined as the norms of appropriate and responsible online behaviour.

Guidelines:

1. Students and staff are expected to put personal electronic devices out of sight and on silent mode or off during instructional time and class time unless otherwise pre-approved. Wearable technology (for example, and not limited to electronic watches) may be worn but configured to prevent distractions, communications, or alerts.

2. Instructional use of personal electronic devices to achieve educational outcomes must be pre-approved by the Principal. The teacher must have a contingency plan using school division electronic devices for students who do not have a personal electronic device and must adhere to the acceptable use policy.
3. Responsible Use of Personal Electronic Devices School Management Plans will be developed according to this policy by the principals and communicated to students, staff, and parents in the Student Handbook at the beginning of the school year. They may be updated from time to time as required. The Principal is expected to conduct an annual plan review before each school year.
4. School administration may augment these guidelines and procedures to include non-instructional time (such as lunch and recess) and communicate with students, staff, and parents in the school handbook at the beginning of each year. They may be updated from time to time as required. The Principal is expected to conduct an annual plan review before each school year.
5. Discipline and consequences for inappropriate use remain at the discretion of the school as per the authority of the Education Act.
6. Temporary removal of personal devices or wearables may occur at the teacher's or Principal's discretion. Formal discussions and parental involvement may be required to address issues that may arise if unresolved with student.
7. Exceptions are the sole discretion of the school administration. Medical information and documentation may be required.
8. If students bring personal electronic devices to school they do so at their own risk. The school will not be responsible for any lost or stolen personal electronic devices.
9. Medical and learning accommodations may occur on case-by-case and may require medical information. Program or medical plans must be pre-approved by the Principal in conjunction with Student Support Services procedures and policies.
10. Students and staff requiring the use of their personal electronic devices during instructional time must seek permission from their teacher/ administrator to make arrangements.
11. Staff may use their personal device for school safety procedures such as attendance, class fieldtrips, and emergency purposes (ie. Call for assistance while on supervision).

Procedures:

1. School Management Procedures will be developed per this policy by the Principal and communicated to students, staff and parents at the beginning of each school year in the school handbook and must include:
 - a. Digital citizenship and responsible use.
 - b. Examples of Intended use in class if approved by administration and communicated in course outlines.
 - c. Examples of Acceptable Use and Unacceptable Use.
 - d. Procedures for Acceptable Use and Unacceptable Use.
2. Classroom management plans will be developed per this policy by the teacher and communicated to students and parents with principal pre-approval at the beginning of each school year and must speak to:
 - a. Digital citizenship lessons and Responsible use
 - b. Intended use in class if approved by administration and communicated in course outlines
 - c. Examples of Acceptable Use and Unacceptable Use

- d. Procedures for Acceptable Use and Unacceptable Use per School Management Plan.
- 3. Medical and learning accommodations will occur on a case-by-case and may require medical information. Program or medical plans must be pre-approved by the Principal in conjunction with Student Support Services procedures and policies.
- 4. Students and staff requiring the use of their personal electronic devices during instructional time must seek permission from their teacher/ administrator to make arrangements.
- 5. All staff are expected to model responsible use of personal electronic devices during instructional time. School-based administration and school division personnel who are provided with electronic devices are expected to use their school division-provided electronic devices for school division and employment-related use when necessary. Staff are also subject to personnel compliance regarding this matter and are subject to disciplinary consequences.
- 6. Parents are encouraged to make arrangements with their child or children ahead of time, and in the event of an emergency, it is highly recommended that they contact the school office to make arrangements with/for their child or children.

References:

Center For the Trauma Informed Practices. 2024. The Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Canadian Schools Trauma-Informed and Systems-Oriented Guidelines and Resources for Implementation.

Government of Saskatchewan. 2015. Digital Citizenship Education Saskatchewan's schools. Accessed August 2024. Publications Centre (saskatchewan.ca)

Government of Saskatchewan. 2024 Personal Electronic Devices and Responsible Use in Schools. Policy Guidelines and Model Administrative Procedure. Published August 2024.