Administrative Procedure Manual
School Administration
Digital Citizenship and Online Safety
AP: 151

Park West School Division
Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow

Digital Citizenship and Online Safety

1. Purpose

To foster a safe, respectful, and supportive learning environment by promoting digital citizenship and online safety across all schools in the Division. This procedure aims to equip students with the skills and awareness to navigate the digital world responsibly, with social media use restrictions during school hours supporting student well-being and academic engagement.

2. Scope

Unless otherwise noted, the following applies to all students, staff, volunteers, and guests while on school property, using school-issued devices, or connected to the Division's network.

3. Definitions

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Computer tools that can perform tasks like creating content, analyzing data, or making decisions. In education, AI may support teaching, learning, and administration and must be used responsibly with attention to ethics, privacy, and fairness.
- **Digital Citizenship:** The responsible and ethical use of technology and digital resources, including understanding online rights, responsibilities, and risks.
- **Divisional Network:** All internet services provided by the Division, including wired, wireless, and school-issued devices.
- **Online Safety:** Practices and protocols to protect individuals from online harm, including cyberbullying, privacy violations, and exposure to inappropriate content.
- **School Day:** Time students are on school property during instructional hours or school activities.
- **Social Media Platforms:** Digital services primarily for social interaction (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Twitter/X, Discord, YouTube excluding approved educational content).

4. Rationale

The digital landscape presents both valuable learning opportunities and risks to student well-being. Evidence from global initiatives demonstrates that a balanced, educational approach enhances social-emotional health and academic focus.

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Digital citizenship education and social media use management support:

- **Social-Emotional Well-Being:** Reducing stress, cyberbullying, and compulsive digital use while fostering positive peer interactions and emotional regulation.
- **Student Engagement & Learning:** Minimizing distractions, promoting focused participation, and encouraging thoughtful interaction with technology as a learning tool.
- **Online Safety:** Equipping students with knowledge and skills to protect their privacy, recognize risks, and respond effectively to digital challenges.

5. Procedure

5.1 Digital Citizenship and Online Safety Framework

- Effective September 2026, all schools will incorporate a school selected but Division-approved framework for teaching digital citizenship and online safety to all students.
- Schools are encouraged to begin exploring and implementing training and resources starting February 2026 to ensure smooth integration.
- Training will cover topics such as responsible technology use, privacy, cyberbullying prevention, critical evaluation of digital content, and balanced screen habits.

5.2 Social Media Use During School Hours

- As part of promoting responsible digital behavior and protecting student well-being:
  - Effective February 16, 2026, access to social media platforms on the Division-owned devices will be blocked during the school day.
    School-issued devices for students will restrict installation and use of social media applications.
  - Personal device use of social media by students during instructional time on school property is prohibited.
  - Exceptions for instructional use will be granted only for approved curriculum-related activities under teacher supervision.

5.3 Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- Park West School Division recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly present in educational environments and may influence teaching, learning, assessment, communication, and administrative practices.
- The Division will develop a Framework for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning by June 2026. This framework will establish expectations, guidance, and safeguards for the ethical, transparent, and educationally appropriate use of AI by staff and pupils.

- Until such time as the framework is implemented, staff are expected to exercise professional judgment, follow existing divisional technology and privacy requirements, and consult with supervisors where uncertainty exists regarding AI use.
    - Staff must use AI tools in a manner that upholds professional boundaries, maintains appropriate staff–pupil relationships, and aligns with this Administrative Procedure and all other divisional policies.
    - AI tools must not be used in ways that replace professional judgment, compromise pupil safety, privacy, dignity, or well-being, or create inappropriate personal interactions or dependencies between staff and pupils.
    - Staff must not use AI applications or platforms to engage in private, undisclosed, or unmonitored interactions with pupils, nor to generate, share, or facilitate inappropriate, misleading, or harmful content.

6. Roles & Responsibilities

6.1 School Administration

- Ensure network restrictions are implemented and maintained.
- Lead communication efforts to inform students, staff, and families about digital citizenship initiatives and social media restrictions.
- Facilitate professional development and resource access for staff to deliver digital citizenship education.

6.2 Teachers & Staff
- Integrate digital citizenship and online safety lessons into classroom activities.
- Enforce social media restrictions during instructional time.
- Model responsible digital behavior and guide students in navigating online challenges.

6.3 Students
- Engage actively in digital citizenship learning.
- Adhere to social media use restrictions and practice safe, respectful online behaviors.

6.4 Parents/Guardians
- Support the Division's efforts by encouraging responsible technology habits at home.
- Engage with school communications and resources related to digital citizenship.

7. Communication

This procedure and the digital citizenship framework may be communicated through:
- Direct communication to students and/or parents
- Division and school newsletters or handbooks

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8. Educational and Restorative Approach

The Division recognizes the importance of balancing student safety with respect for privacy and trust. The implementation of this procedure is intended to be educational and preventative in nature.

Monitoring and enforcement practices will be reasonable, transparent, and consistent with applicable legislation, divisional policies, and professional standards, with a primary focus on supporting safe and responsible digital citizenship.

Responses to inappropriate or unsafe digital behaviour will prioritize teaching, guidance, and restoration, considering student age, developmental stage, and intent. Disciplinary measures, where required, will align with existing divisional policies and focus on learning, accountability, and well-being.

9. Monitoring and Review

The procedure and digital citizenship framework will be reviewed annually.