Cell Phone and Personal Technology Device Use

Introduction

Park West School Division is implementing this procedure in alignment with provincial guidelines to restrict cell phone and personal technology device use during instructional time and the school day. This procedure aims to create a focused learning environment while recognizing the importance of developing digital citizenship skills in students.

For the purposes of this procedure, references to "cell phones" and "personal technology devices" include personal wearable technologies (such as smart watches and smart glasses) and any other personal electronic devices capable of cell phone-like functions, including messaging, social media, internet browsing, photography, audio or video recording, or artificial intelligence (AI) tools.

Guiding Principles

Safe and Respectful Use:
Students and staff are expected to use cell phones and personal technology devices in a safe and respectful manner, adhering to school policies and guidelines at all times.

Minimizing Classroom Distractions:
Measures will be implemented to minimize disruptions to instructional time caused by cell phones.

Compliance with Provincial Guidelines:
This procedure is established in accordance with the provincial requirement for school divisions to create use of technology policies tailored to local needs while adhering to provincial guidelines.

General Guidelines

Kindergarten to Grade 8:

- Cell phone and personal wearable technology use is not permitted during all school hours, including lunch and breaks.
- Devices (including smart watches, smart glasses, and other wearables with cell phone-like functions) must be turned off and stored out of sight during the entire school day.

Grades 9 to 12:

- Students are permitted to have cell phones and personal technology devices on their person, in their locker, or gym bag. The devices should be set to "Do Not Disturb" or powered off during class.
- Cell phone and personal wearable technology use is prohibited during instructional times.
- Students may use cell phones and personal technology devices during breaks and lunch periods.
- Cell phones and personal technology devices may be used for educational purposes when explicitly directed by classroom teachers.

School Staff:

- Staff members are expected to model responsible cell phone and personal technology device use.
- Personal cell phone and wearable device use should be limited to non-instructional times unless required for emergency or educational purposes.

Additional Considerations

Personal Responsibility:
Students and staff are responsible for the appropriate use and care of their cell phones and personal technology devices while on school property or participating in school-related activities.

Designated Use Times:
The restrictions on cell phones and personal technology devices (including photography, audio, and video recording capabilities) extend to all areas of the school including classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and changerooms.

Silent or Vibrate Mode:
Cell phones and personal wearable devices should be set to silent mode (or powered off in accordance with grade-level guidelines) during instructional time to minimize disruptions.

Other Electronic Devices:
Personal wearable technology devices with functions similar to cell phones, including smart watches, smart glasses, and other wearables allowing access to messaging, social media, internet browsing, photography, audio/video recording, or AI tools, are treated the same as cell phones and are subject to all restrictions outlined in this procedure. Other personal electronic devices (such as tablets or laptops) may not be used for unauthorized communication, recording, or internet access during instructional periods.

Accommodations for Cell Phone Use

Accessibility Needs:
The use of digital devices may be used to support students with disabilities or diverse abilities as outlined in students' support plans. This includes the use of assistive technology on personal digital or wearable devices at school to support student accessibility, communication, and autonomy.

Medical and Health Needs:
The use of personal digital or wearable devices (such as a smart watch or phone) may be used to support medical necessities, such as monitoring blood glucose levels for a student with diabetes.

Emergency Situations:
In the event of an emergency, students and staff may use their cell phones or personal communication devices to communicate with families, emergency services, or divisional administration, as necessary.

School Buses:
Personal use of cell phones and personal technology devices is permitted on school buses. Given that many students experience long bus rides, allowing access to their devices may help reduce incidents on the bus by providing a means of entertainment or communication.

Procedures for Implementation

Communication:
This procedure will be communicated to students, staff, parents, and the wider school community through appropriate channels.

Enforcement:
School administrators and staff will enforce the cell phone use procedure consistently and fairly. Consequences for violations may include:
a) Verbal warnings
b) Confiscation of the device for the remainder of the day
c) Parent/guardian notification and requirement for parent/guardian pick up of device.
d) Detention or loss of privileges
e) In-school suspension for repeat offenses
f) Other measures as deemed appropriate by school administration

Training and Education:
Schools will provide training on responsible cell phone use and digital citizenship, including strategies for managing distractions.

Review, Communication, and Updating

- To ensure the effectiveness and relevance of this administrative procedure, Park West School Division includes provisions for regular review and updates. We commit to conducting periodic reviews of the policy to reflect changes in technology, social media platforms, and relevant legislation.

- In accordance with Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning directives, this administrative procedure is communicated directly to all employees, students, and families, and is maintained in a publicly accessible location on school and divisional websites.