

STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Background

The Division recognizes its responsibility, alongside parents, to provide a Christ-centered and safe learning environment. While personal mobile devices can offer access to valuable educational resources, they also present potential distractions and challenges. 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. We emphasize the importance of modeling socially responsible behavior and fostering a safe, caring environment where teaching and learning can thrive.

Definitions

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

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, 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. School-Based Policy Development

- 1.1. Each principal will develop school-based guidelines that incorporate the stipulations of this administrative procedure to regulate the use of personal mobile devices.
- 1.2. The principal shall inform staff, students, and parents/guardians about procedures and guidelines regulating personal mobile device usage during school hours and school-sanctioned events.
- 1.3. Individual school policies will outline clear expectations and consequences for inappropriate use.

2. General Restrictions

- 2.1. Students are expected to adhere the following expectations regarding the use of personal mobile devices:

- 2.1.1. **Cellphones:** Students are prohibited from using cellphones during instructional time, **unless explicitly directed to do so by the classroom teacher.**
- 2.1.2. **Smartwatches:** Smartwatches are not to be used for communication purposes or accessing social media during instruction time. Students are responsible to ensure that notifications are turned off and that their smartwatch is not a source of distraction.
- 2.1.3. **Laptops and Tablets:** Devices such as laptops and tablets will continue to be used as integral instructional tools, under the direction of the classroom teacher.
- 2.2. Cellphones must be turned off or set to silent and stored **as per the guidelines outlined by the school.** Laptops and tablets that are intended to be used for educational purposes may be with a student during class and used as directed by the teacher.
- 2.3. Students are not permitted to access social media on school networks or devices during school hours.

3. Limited Use Exceptions

- 3.1. Limited use of personal mobile devices may be permitted for health or medical reasons, as determined by the principal.
- 3.2. Personal mobile devices may be allowed for educational purposes or to support diverse learning needs, at the principal's discretion.
- 3.3. Limited access to social media may be allowed under special circumstances, as determined by the principal.

4. Progressive Discipline

- 4.1. Confiscation, restriction and/or prohibition of personal mobile devices may extend to:
 - 4.1.1. instructional time;
 - 4.1.2. non-instructional time;
 - 4.1.3. periods of time students are being transported; and
 - 4.1.4. specific locations in the building or on school property.
- 4.2. Violations of this procedure will be addressed through a progressive discipline approach, which may include:
 - 4.2.1. Verbal warnings.
 - 4.2.2. Confiscation of devices for specified periods of time.
 - 4.2.3. In-School Suspension.
- 4.3. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child is found to be in violation of this administrative procedure.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1. **Staff:** Ensure consistent and fair enforcement of this procedure and model the acceptable use of personal mobile devices, as per the school's policy or guidelines.
- 5.2. **Students:** Comply with all restrictions and storage requirements, as well as direction from school staff.
- 5.3. **Parents/Guardians:** Support the school's efforts by ensuring students understand and comply with this procedure.

6. Communication

- 6.1. This procedure will be communicated to staff, students, and parents/guardians annually and will be made accessible through the Division's website.

References:

Ministerial Order #014/2024
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations
Administrative Procedure 140 - Use of Technology

Implementation Date: August 21, 2024