

STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICES

Background

The district believes that students learn best when they are in an environment that supports learning and limits distractions. This administrative procedure follows the expectations as described in the Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order, requiring district [Codes of Conduct](#) to outline the use and restrictions of personal digital devices. It provides consistency in restricting student personal digital device use at school, particularly during instructional times, or learning related activities.

The district also recognizes the capacity with new and future technologies to create opportunities for constructive applications that can aid instruction and learning.

The use of these technologies should be balanced by requirements for safety, security, and privacy for students and staff. The restricted use of student personal digital devices creates the necessary space for focused learning and positive interpersonal connections in the classroom with fewer distractions and interruptions.

Student use of personal digital devices will be at the discretion of supervising staff. This regulated and supervised use will be critical in reinforcing responsible and respectful use of technology, and student safety from online security threats and social media. Students who do not comply with this Administrative Procedure may be subject to progressive discipline outlined in the Code of Conduct - Interventions and Supports.

The security and storage of personal digital devices is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The district assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of these devices.

Personal Digital Device: Refers to any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cell phone, a tablet, smart watches, gaming devices, and electronic toys, and includes the use of earbuds and headphones.

Procedures

1. Use of Personal Digital Devices

The use of personal digital devices should be appropriate to a student's age and developmental stage. Elementary school codes of conduct take a more restrictive approach, while middle and secondary schools allow for some flexibility and teacher agency in using personal digital devices for educational purposes.

- **Elementary Schools:** Little or no use of personal digital devices.
- **Middle Schools:** Limited use of personal digital devices is permitted during instructional time for educational purposes.
- **Secondary Schools:** Limited use of personal digital devices is permitted during instructional time for educational purposes, and during scheduled breaks.

Specific information can be found within the Elementary, Middle and Secondary Codes of Conduct which include statements about restricting the use of personal digital devices during hours of instruction.

2. Accessibility and Accommodation Needs

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

3. Medical and Health Needs

Personal digital devices may be used to support medical necessities, such as monitoring blood glucose levels for a student with diabetes.

4. Equity to Support Learning Outcomes

Considerations will be made to ensure personal digital device restrictions do not disproportionately impact some students more than others. For example, computer or cell phone access facilitated by the school district to support students who do not have access to the internet outside of school and who therefore might use technology at school to complete schoolwork.

5. Digital Literacy

While we recognize the importance of setting restrictions on the use of personal digital devices within our school district, it is essential to emphasize that we still have the responsibility of teaching Digital Literacy and Online Safety.

Digital Literacy is a critical skill in today's technology-driven world. We aim to empower our students to be responsible, informed, and ethical digital citizens. By integrating technology into classroom practice and providing opportunities for its use, we equip our learners with skills that encourage productivity, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

References:

- *BC School Act (Section 168)*
- *Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct M276/07*
- *Administrative Procedure 140 – Use of Technology and Information Systems*
- *Administrative Procedure 350 – District Code of Conduct*
- *Ministry of Education and Child Care – Personal Digital Device Restrictions Support Guide*

The following are revised (draft) sections from the Code of Conduct for the three levels that will be introduced to students for the 2024/25 school year.

Elementary School

	Respect for Self	Respect for Others	Respect for Surroundings
Personal Digital Devices (PDD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If I require a PDD for medical or accessibility needs, I will use it only as described in my Individual Education Plan or Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand some students may require a PDD for medical or accessibility needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I make sure that if I have a PDD on the school grounds or at a school event, it is powered off and put away.

[Digital Literacy in Saanich Schools](#)

Middle School

Personal Digital Devices

Saanich Schools are committed to restricting the use of personal digital devices at school to promote online safety, digital literacy and focused learning environments

I have the right to learn in a focused, respectful, and safe learning environment and school community free from the distraction of digital devices.

I have the responsibility to ensure my personal digital device is turned off and stored in my locker or backpack from the first bell to the last bell at the end of the day. This includes earbuds and headphones.

I may use personal digital devices during instructional time for educational purposes only with permission and under the supervision of a staff member. During these times, I understand that I must use any digital device ethically, safely, and responsibly. In addition, I am aware that the device must be returned to my locker or backpack once the specific learning task is complete.

I understand some students will require access to their personal digital device to ensure accessibility and support accommodation needs or for medical/health needs.

Our office phone may be used to both make and receive calls if students or parents need to notify each other for important matters during the school day. Personal digital devices may be turned back on at the end of the school day and used to communicate directly with parents/family/friends who are assisting in transportation.

Why?

Digital devices can be used to support educational purposes in significant ways, but they can distract and harm others if used inappropriately. It is important to learn how to use these devices in appropriate ways and at appropriate times.

Personal digital devices promote disconnection between students and their learning as well as their interpersonal relationships. There is a growing field of research into the impacts of personal devices on mental health and academic performance. Limiting access to distractions enhances the ability to focus thus improving student performance.

Intimidation or bullying through the use of digital devices will not be tolerated at school. Therefore, I will not be involved in taking or posting photos or videos and/or hurtful messages or comments about others in any electronic forum.

The Order defines this term as “any personal digital device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cell phone or a tablet.” Additional examples of devices that may fall into this definition are smart watches, gaming devices, and electronic toys, and includes earbuds and headphones.

Secondary School

Personal Digital Devices

Saanich Schools are committed to restricting the use of personal digital devices at school for the purpose of promoting online safety, digital literacy and focused learning environments

It is expected that students store their personal digital devices (cell phones, headphones, etc...) out of sight, in their backpack or locker, and on airplane mode during class time. Teachers may plan student use of personal digital devices for instructional purposes. Some students will require access to their personal digital device to ensure accessibility and support prescribed accommodation or medical/health needs..

Our office phone may be used to both make and receive calls if students or parents need to notify each other for important matters during class time. Personal digital devices may be accessed during lunch and transition times.

Personal digital devices 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. Showing disrespect for another person's privacy through improper use of a personal digital device will result in the loss of cell phone/personal device use while on school property.

The Order defines this term as "any personal digital device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as a cell phone or a tablet." Additional examples of devices that may fall into this definition are smart watches, gaming devices, and electronic toys, and includes earbuds and headphones.

Acceptable Use of Internet Technology

School computers and internet resources, used carefully and wisely, can provide important avenues of learning for students. Inappropriate uses of Internet communications, including the sending of threatening or harassing comments or cyberbullying, are unacceptable. Any incidents will be addressed as a very serious issue. Students will engage in appropriate curricular behaviour when using the district network. Students will not publish other people's personal information. For example, name, location, phone number, images, video, work, username, or other personal information. Online activity/social media outside of school hours when it negatively affects the safety and wellbeing of students is not acceptable.