
USE OF PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES

Background

Personal mobile devices (PMD) can offer advantages within a learning context by providing students with immediate access to educational resources, enabling collaborative learning through communication tools, and facilitating learning experiences through educational apps and online platforms. However, it is crucial to regulate these technologies to minimize distractions, ensure a focused and respectful learning environment, and protect student and staff privacy and well-being.

Consistent and equitable regulation helps maximize the educational benefits of these devices while mitigating potential negative impacts such as reduced academic performance and poor mental health.

In compliance with Ministerial Order #014/2024, this administrative procedure applies to using PMDs during the school day and school-sanctioned events on or off campus.

This administrative procedure sets the minimum restrictions that all schools within Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD) must follow. The guidelines for all instructional use of personal mobile devices must be clearly articulated in school procedures to align with this administrative procedure. Schools have the right and authority to place further restrictions at their discretion to meet the needs of their school community and context. School procedures must consider the student population at the school. The principal or equivalent will forward school procedures to the Office of the Superintendent at the beginning of each school year.

As parents/guardians are partners in their child's education, they are expected to assist their student(s) with the responsible and appropriate use of all personal mobile devices as per this administrative procedure.

Definitions

Personal Mobile Devices (PMDs): includes any personally owned electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, WiFi, or cellular data network, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, gaming device, headphones, or smartwatch.

Instructional Time: includes all time during a scheduled period when students are in the classroom or time outside the classroom when teachers take responsibility for ensuring that student learning activities are directed toward achieving the outcomes of approved programs of study and instructional support plans.

Non-Instructional Time: includes time during the school day when students are not scheduled to be with a teacher. It also includes before and after school, breaks, and lunch.

Division-Managed School Networks (DMSN): includes accessing the internet or Grande Yellowhead Public School Division digital resources while on school property.

Division-Managed Extended Networks (DMEN): includes accessing the internet or Grande Yellowhead Public School Division digital resources during Divisional-operated transportation services.

Confiscate: when staff temporarily take possession of a student's personal mobile device.

Procedure:

1. The security and storage of these items are the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The Division assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement of personal mobile devices.
2. Students are strongly recommended to leave their cell phones at home. The safest place for storage of cell phones is at home. Students who choose to bring cell phones to school do so at their own risk.
3. It is expected that all student PMDs must be powered off and stored in each student's locker, or, if lockers are unavailable, in a backpack during instructional time:
 - 3.1 Teachers and school staff are not expected to provide storage or monitor the whereabouts of devices.
 - 3.2 Students are not to keep personal mobile devices on their person during instructional times.
 - 3.3 In Kindergarten to Grade 8, schools have the authority to establish further restrictions that require students to keep their personal mobile devices powered off and stored out of view for the entire day.
 - 3.4 In Grades 9 through 12, schools have the authority to establish further restrictions that require students to keep their personal mobile devices powered off and stored out of view for the entire day.
4. Exceptions to the use of PMDs may be permitted on a case-by-case basis, as determined by a principal or equivalent for the following:
 - 4.1 to support, monitor, or regulate an identified health and/or medical condition as per the student's medical plan;
 - 4.2 to support an identified inclusive educational need (Assistive Technologies for accessibility and accommodation) as per the student's Individual Support Plan;
 - 4.3 limited use of personal mobile devices for specific educational purposes.
 - 4.4 principal, or equivalent, must document all circumstances in which these exceptions have been granted on **Appendix 145 A Form – Personal Mobile Device Use Exceptions**.
 - 4.4.1 All documented records are subject to an audit by the Office of the Superintendent or designated staff member.
5. Personal mobile devices are prohibited to be used at any time:
 - 5.1 in bathrooms and changing rooms;
 - 5.2 during test or examination settings;
 - 5.2.1 students requiring access to a PMD during tests or examinations must have explicit permission to do so from the principal or equivalent;
 - 5.3 schools are not public buildings; therefore, sharing and recording videos and/or photos of individuals without explicit consent is prohibited.
 - 5.3.1 Videos and photos may be taken during public events on school property (i.e., sports, tournaments, drama productions, community events) when there is no reasonable expectation of privacy.
6. Schools have the right and authority to temporarily confiscate, restrict, and/or prohibit personal mobile device usage while individuals are on school property and/or in attendance at school sponsored activities.

- 6.1 When a teacher or principal temporarily confiscates a student's PMD, it must be securely stored until returned to the student and/or parent/guardian.
- 6.2 The confiscated PMD must be clearly labelled with the student's name.
7. Consequences for not abiding by this administrative procedure will result in the following progressive actions:
 - 7.1 directed to put PMD away in the designated location;
 - 7.2 temporary confiscation followed by a conversation with the student and parent/guardian, whereby the student or parent/guardian may regain access/collect the PMD at the end of the school day;
 - 7.3 prohibition of devices on school property and student access to DMSN and DMEN (i.e., school bus Wi-Fi) is revoked;
 - 7.4 Further incident(s) may result in other actions as outlined in Administrative Procedure 350 – Student Code of Conduct.
8. Staff who bring personal mobile devices to school shall comply with Administrative Procedure 140 - Digital Technology.
9. During instructional time, staff are expected to be role models for students.
 - 9.1 The staff use of PMDs must align with instructional goals.

Reference: Ministerial Order #014/2024; Sections 31, 33, 52, 53, 196, 19, 222, Education Act
Red Deer Public Schools - AP 145
Horizon School Division
Northland School Division - AP 145
Wolf Creek Public School Division - AP 140
Rocky View Schools - AP 148
Canadian Rockies School Division - AP 145
Personal Digital Device Restrictions Support Guide – Ministry of Education, British Columbia

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