

607.4.2 Personal Mobile Device and Social Media Use in Schools

Purpose

Lethbridge School Division is committed to providing welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that promote wellbeing and support learning for all students. The Division recognizes the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools may provide opportunities to enhance student learning and wellbeing or may contribute to situations that negatively impact learning and wellbeing.

This administrative procedure is intended to assist students, staff, parents/guardians, caregivers and stakeholders in minimizing the negative effects of personal mobile devices and social media in schools. It is important to recognize the responsibility for appropriate use of these technologies does not rest solely with schools or Lethbridge School Division. Primary responsibility for the use of personal mobile devices and social media lies with students, parents/guardians and caregivers.

This administrative procedure establishes standards and guidelines for student use of personal devices and access to social media within schools in accordance with Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools” and Policy 607.4 Responsible Use of Technology. This procedure is not intended to address every possible scenario involving personal mobile devices, social media and technology in schools. Staff will use their professional judgement when addressing situations that fall outside of the scope and guidelines provided in this procedure.

Definitions

Digital Citizenship: The norms of appropriate responsible behaviour with regard to the use of technology.

Responsible Use of Technology: The ethical, safe, and respectful use of digital devices, internet, and applications, which may include but is not limited to protecting privacy, adhering to legal standards, engaging in positive online behavior, balancing technology use with other activities, respecting intellectual property, and using technology to enhance learning and growth.

Personal Mobile Device: Any personal electronic device capable of communicating or accessing the internet. This includes but is not limited to cellphones, tablets, laptops, and smartwatches. It may also include devices capable of communicating with a personal mobile device such as headphones, earbuds or smart speakers.

Division Mobile Devices: Division-owned devices such as tablets and laptops are considered separate from this procedure. These devices may be used under the supervision of a teacher or with approval from school administration for specific learning activities structured to enhance student learning outcomes.

Social Media: Platforms and applications that enable users to create, share, and interact with content and connect with others through virtual communities and networks. Social media encompasses various forms of communication, including text, images, videos, and other multimedia, allowing for real-time interaction and content sharing. The Division reserves the right to determine which platforms, applications and mediums are considered social media for the purposes of this procedure and restrict or limit access to them on Division networks. Certain social media platforms and applications including, but not limited to, Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram will not be accessed on Division networks. Some platforms including but not limited to, YouTube, Pinterest and Microsoft Teams, may have limited access on Division networks for educational or extra curricular purposes. Social media platforms are constantly changing, as such the Division reserves the right to change network access to social media platforms at its sole discretion.

Instructional Time: Instructional time includes time scheduled for purposes of instruction, examinations/testing, and other student activities where direct student–teacher interaction and supervision are maintained. This includes all times during a scheduled period where students are in the classroom or time outside the classroom, where teachers take responsibility for ensuring learning activities for students are directed towards achieving the outcomes of approved programs of study and instructional support plans. A Principal has the discretion to determine what is instructional time.

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

Procedures

Section 1 - Restrictions on Student Personal Mobile Devices in Schools

- 1.1 Elementary (Kindergarten to Grade 5) Personal mobile device use is not permitted during the entirety of the school day, this includes instructional time and non-instructional time. Exceptions may be granted under section 3 of this procedure.
- 1.2 Middle School (Grade 6 to Grade 8) Personal mobile device use is not permitted during instructional time unless a student is granted an exception under section 3 of this procedure. During non-instructional time, the use of personal mobile

devices is discouraged and will be limited. Middle schools may choose not to allow the use of personal mobile devices during non-instructional time. If allowed, usage must not exceed 30 minutes total per school day and must comply with all responsible use, school, Division and statutory requirements.

- 1.3 High School (Grade 9 to 12) Personal mobile device use is not permitted during instructional time unless a student is granted an exception under section 3 of this procedure. The use of personal mobile devices during non-instructional time is permitted subject to responsible use, and in compliance with all school, Division and statutory requirements.
- 1.4 Schools must have a process for storing personal mobile devices that are brought to school or to classrooms during instructional time. This process must be communicated to students, parents/guardians and caregivers. This may include but is not limited to: storing the devices in lockers, storing them in a classroom in a way that is approved by their teacher (e.g. class cellphone pouch), storing them individually out of sight (e.g. in a backpack) or other protocols identified by the school.
 - 1.4.1 If personal mobile devices are present in classrooms they must be kept on silent or powered off and stored out of view during instructional time unless a student is granted an exception under section 3 of this procedure.
- 1.5 Staff, schools and/or Lethbridge School Division assume no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of personal mobile devices that are brought to schools and are not responsible for personal mobile devices that are damaged or lost when they are being stored by the school or in classrooms.
- 1.6 Per policy 607.4 Responsible Use of Technology, recording in classrooms, schools or school activities and sharing of videos and/or photos of individuals without explicit consent is not permitted with the exception of photos and recordings made at public events associated with school activities.
 - 1.6.1 Taking photos, filming, recording is strictly prohibited in changerooms or washrooms.

Section 2 Restrictions on Student Use of Social Media in Schools

- 2.1 Students are not permitted to access certain social media platforms on school networks unless granted an exception under section 3 of this procedure.
- 2.2 The Division reserves the right to determine which platforms, applications and mediums are considered social media for the purposes of this procedure and restrict or limit access to them on Division networks. Certain social media platforms and applications such as Snapchat, TikTok and Instagram will not be accessed on Division networks. Some platforms such as YouTube, Pinterest and Microsoft Teams, may have limited access on Division networks for educational or extra curricular purposes. Social media platforms are constantly changing, as such the Division reserves the right to change access to social media platforms at its sole discretion.

Section 3 Student Personal Mobile Device and Social Media Use Exceptions

- 3.1 Limited use of personal mobile devices will be permitted for health or medical reasons. Exceptions for health or medical reasons will be approved by the Principal or designate;
 - 3.1.1 on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with a Division of Instructional Services designate, school administration may request a medical practitioner verify in writing that an exception is required to support, monitor or regulate an identified health and/or medical condition per their medical plan. The medical practitioner's document does not have to specify a medical diagnosis or disclose personal health information. Students are not required to disclose any medical diagnosis, conditions or personal medical information.
- 3.2 Limited use of personal mobile devices will be permitted for educational purposes. Exceptions for educational purposes will be determined and approved by the Principal or designate. Exceptions will typically be part of an Instructional Support Plan (ISP) for the student.
- 3.3 Principals may grant limited use of personal mobile devices for other purposes. These exceptions will be determined and approved by the Principal or designate.
- 3.4 Principals may request limited access to social media on school networks. These exceptions will be approved by the Division.

Section 4 Roles and Responsibilities

Lethbridge School Division is responsible for:

- 4.1 Contributing to and setting expectations for fostering welcoming, safe and caring learning environments.
- 4.2 Creating and updating Division policies and procedures related to technology and responsible use of technology that are consistent with Ministerial Order #014/2024 "Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools" and the Education Act.
 - 4.2.1 creating and updating Division policies and procedures specifically related to personal mobile devices and social media use in schools that are consistent with the ministerial order and the Education Act;
 - 4.2.2 where appropriate, providing stakeholders with opportunities to provide input and feedback on these policies and procedures.
- 4.3 Determining which social media sites will be accessible and/or inaccessible on Division networks.
- 4.4 Supporting schools in the implementation of policies and procedures related to technology, responsible use of technology, personal mobile device use and social media use.

Schools are responsible for:

- 4.5 Contributing to and setting expectations for fostering welcoming, safe and caring learning environments.
- 4.6 Creating and updating school processes that are in alignment with this procedure, with applicable policies, Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools” and the Education Act;
 - 4.6.1 communicating with students, parents/guardians and caregivers about these processes;
 - 4.6.2 where appropriate, providing stakeholders including school council with opportunities to provide input and feedback on these processes and their implementation.
- 4.7 Ensuring compliance with this procedure, applicable policies, Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools” and the Education Act;
 - 4.7.1 addressing instances of non-compliance per section 5 of this procedure;
 - 4.7.2 communicating the process for addressing instances of non-compliance with students, parents/guardians and caregivers;
 - 4.7.3 providing learning opportunities for students about responsible use of technology;
 - 4.7.4 developing and communicating processes to students, parents/guardian and caregivers for storage of personal mobile devices in schools. These processes may include but are not limited to storing the devices in lockers, storing them in a classroom in a way that is approved by their teacher (e.g. class cellphone pouch), storing them individually out of sight (e.g. in a backpack). Schools may develop other protocols not identified in this procedure to store personal mobile devices;
 - 4.7.5 informing parents/guardians and caregivers regarding protocols for contacting students during the school day without relying on personal mobile devices.
- 4.8 A school may limit the use of personal mobile devices and social media beyond what is outlined in this procedure. These additional limitations must comply with this procedure, applicable policies, Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools” and the Education Act.

Staff are responsible for:

- 4.9 Contributing to and setting expectations for fostering welcoming, safe and caring learning environments.
- 4.10 Where appropriate, modelling responsible use of technology, personal mobile devices and social media in a manner consistent with this procedure and in alignment with Division policies and responsible use agreements. It is acknowledged there may be instances where staff need to use these tools to fulfill their professional responsibilities even if this occasionally conflicts with the procedure.

- 4.11 Supervising students and their use of technology.
- 4.12 Creating classroom guidelines and expectations that are consistent with this procedure, applicable policies, Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools” and the Education Act.
- 4.13 Addressing instances of non-compliance per section 5 of this procedure;
 - 4.13.1 Using reasoned professional judgement when addressing instances of non-compliance or when addressing situations that may not be covered directly or clearly by this procedure.
- 4.14 Reviewing this procedure and Policy 607.4 Responsible Use of Technology.

Students are responsible for:

- 4.15 Contributing to a welcoming, safe and caring learning environment.
- 4.16 Using technology, personal mobile devices and social media responsibly and in a way that is consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, this procedure and school processes.
- 4.17 Taking responsibility for their use of personal mobile devices and social media.
- 4.18 Supporting schools and the Division in implementing this procedure and applicable policy and school processes.
- 4.19 Taking steps to minimize the negative impact personal mobile devices and social media may have on themselves, other students, staff, the school and the school community.

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers are responsible for:

- 4.20 Contributing to a welcoming, safe and caring learning environment.
- 4.21 Ensuring their children understand and adhere to the school’s policies on the use of personal mobile devices and social media. This includes actively monitoring and guiding their child’s use of these devices to support a focused learning environment.
- 4.22 Supporting schools and the Division in implementing this procedure, applicable policy and school processes.
- 4.23 Taking steps to minimize the negative impact personal mobile devices and social media has on their children, other students, staff, the school and the school community.
- 4.24 Limiting attempts to contact their child/student via a personal mobile device during the school day to avoid unnecessary distractions.

Section 5 Non-Compliance

- 5.1 Students that are not compliant with this procedure may face consequences resulting from their conduct.
- 5.2 Reasoned professional judgement must be used when assigning consequences for non-compliance;
 - 5.2.1 consequences should be proportional to the conduct;

- 5.2.2 where appropriate, response to continued misconduct should result in progressively more significant consequences;
- 5.2.3 when assigning consequences the staff member should consider the context in which the misconduct occurred.
- 5.3 Consequences must be in alignment with procedure 502.1.9 Student Discipline.
- 5.4 Consequences may include, but are not limited to, verbal reminder, confiscation of personal mobile device, restrictions on use of Division network, referral to administration. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary processes such as suspension from school or other appropriate disciplinary measures. Staff may assign reasonable, proportional consequences for non-compliance that are not listed in this procedure;
 - 5.4.1 staff or school administration must inform parents if a personal mobile device is confiscated or if a disciplinary consequence is assigned beyond a verbal reminder;
 - 5.4.2 if a personal mobile device is confiscated by a staff member, the device must be securely stored.

Section 6 Communication and Notification

- 6.1 The Division will post this procedure on the Division website.
- 6.2 The Division will provide an annual reminder to students, parents/guardians, and caregivers about the procedure at the beginning of the school year.
- 6.3 Schools will communicate to students, parents/guardians and caregivers the processes they have in place to support this procedure.

References

Education Act	Sections 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 55
Division Polices:	607.4 Responsible Use of Technology, 500.1 Student Rights and Responsibilities, 502.1 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments, Appendix A - 502.1 Student Code of Conduct, 502.1.9, Student Discipline, 400.1 Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Work Environments.
Other:	Ministerial Order #014/2024 “Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices in Schools”