

MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION, AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS “MHPSD” AND/OR “DIVISION”

SECTION 600 – Students

POLICY 608: PERSONAL DIGITAL DEVICES

BACKGROUND

According to the Ministerial Order (#014/2024), a school authority is required to have policies and/or procedures relating to the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools. These policies and procedures are required to:

- Set out the General Restrictions and Limited Use Exceptions.
- Address the location(s) and/or manner(s) in which personal mobile devices are to be stored.
- Address what constitutes “social media.”
- Incorporate a progressive discipline approach to address violations.
- Set out the roles and responsibilities of staff, children and students, parents, and other members of the school community in ensuring compliance.

POLICY

The Board believes that personal digital devices offer potential opportunities for communication, information access, and enhanced opportunities for instruction and learning. However, restricted use of personal digital devices in schools is required, particularly as it relates to student use of cell phones, to ensure the promotion of a safe and caring learning environment. As such, the Board expects schools to implement school-based practices to ensure appropriate use of personal digital devices so that these practices contribute to the online safety and security of students and staff, minimize risk to personal well-being, enhance focused learning environments, and protect personal privacy and academic integrity.

DEFINITIONS

- **Personal Digital Device:** Any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.
- **Instructional Time:** Includes all time during a scheduled period where students are in the classroom, or time outside the classroom where teachers take responsibility for ensuring that learning activities for students are directed toward achieving the outcomes of approved programs of study and instructional support plans.
- **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.
- **Social Media:** Platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking.

GUIDELINES

- Schools have the right and authority to temporarily confiscate, restrict, and/or prohibit cell phone usage while individuals are on school property and/or in attendance at school-sponsored activities.
- Schools shall provide notice to staff, students, and parents that the use of personal digital devices may be banned and/or restricted, including what those bans/restrictions are, and shall communicate the possibility of the imposition of disciplinary action by the school or criminal penalties if the device is used in a criminal act.
- Schools' administrative procedures may include guidelines for parent/staff, staff/student, and staff/staff communication both during and after the school day.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE APPROACH

A progressive discipline approach will be implemented to address violations of this policy. This approach will include a range of consequences that may be applied based on the severity and frequency of the violations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Staff:** Ensure compliance with the policy and model appropriate use of personal digital devices.
- **Students:** Adhere to the policy and use personal digital devices responsibly.
- **Parents:** Support the policy and reinforce appropriate use of personal digital devices at home.
- **School Community:** Collaborate to ensure a safe and focused learning environment.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

608 P 001 – Bring Your Own Device

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE – EXHIBIT

608 E 001 – Student Responsible Use of Technology Agreement