



USE OF PERSONALLY OWNED ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Background

Board Policy 1: Board Mandate, Mission, Vision, Values and Goals ensures that resources and efforts best serve the needs of all students. Modern learning spaces need to be reflective of the real-world context in which our students learn, socialize and grow. Digital connectivity is part of everyday life for our students; therefore, it is necessary to ensure students have the opportunity to access digital information, communication tools, and pursue lines of inquiry and interest in the academic disciplines and beyond, in a safe, responsible and informed manner. Technological literacy and proficiency are key to not only academic success, but also enabling students to connect to the global community beyond the school building. However, the use of personal mobile devices can be a source of distraction that can negatively impact a student's learning, mental health, and engagement if not managed responsibly. Personally Owned Electronic Devices (POEDs) are digital devices that are brought into the school or to school-sanctioned events that are not owned by Holy Spirit Catholic School Division and may include cell phones, tablets, laptops or wearable technology such as smartwatches. Holy Spirit schools are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that promote the responsible and ethical use of technology. Staff, students and parents/guardians all have a responsibility to model, support and uphold the expectations of technology use and compliance with this procedure.

Definitions

“Social Media” refers to digital technology that allows the sharing of ideas and information, including text and visuals, through virtual networks and communities. Social media may include, but is not limited to, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, X (Twitter), TikTok, WhatsApp, etc.

“Wearable technology” refers to any kind of electronic device designed to be worn on the user's body. Such devices can take many different forms, including jewelry, accessories, medical devices, and clothing or elements of clothing.

“Smartwatch” refers to a wristwatch (or other wearable device) with computerized functionality (such as the ability to display text messages, email, or other notifications).

Procedures

The following procedures apply to the use of personally owned electronic devices during the school day and during any school-sanctioned event, on or off-campus.

1. Personally Owned Electronic Devices (POEDs) are not to be operated by students during regularly scheduled instructional time or during any school-sponsored activity, such as an assembly or talk by a guest speaker, unless such use is approved by the classroom teacher to facilitate learning activities.

- 1.1 POEDs are to be kept in silent mode or powered off and stored in the student's backpack, secured in the student's locker or stored in another mutually agreed-upon location during instructional and school-sponsored activities.
 - 1.2 A Principal (or designate) may permit the limited use of POEDs for health or medical reasons or to support special learning needs.
 - 1.3 POEDs accessing the division's network may not access social media.
2. POEDs are not to be taken into test or examination settings.
3. POEDs are never to be used in settings such as change rooms, washrooms, private counseling rooms, or any other settings that have the potential to violate a person's reasonable expectation of privacy.
4. As schools are not public buildings, the privacy of all individuals within the building must be protected at all times. Any digital images, recordings, and/or videos that are taken of other students or staff at the school are done so with the explicit permission of the student(s)/staff involved and are to be shared (electronically via messaging, social media, or any other means of file sharing) only with permission and in a responsible, ethical manner.
5. Students who bring POEDs to the school are expected to comply with all parts of Administrative Procedure 315 - Student Code of Conduct. Students who consistently refuse to comply with the division's procedures for use of POEDs in the school setting may be subject to progressive, escalating disciplinary measures as outlined in Administrative Procedure 319 - Suspension and Expulsion of Students or as detailed in the school's rules policies.
 - 5.1 If Holy Spirit staff have reasonable grounds to believe that an electronic device contains evidence pertaining to a breach of the division's Student Code of Conduct and/or the School Behaviour Policy, it is the expectation that students make available to school administration the unaltered contents of the permanent and/or removable memory of their cellular phone or electronic device, in accordance with Administrative Procedure 320 - Interrogation of Students and Administrative Procedure 321 - Student Search Procedure. Failure to make the contents available can be considered willful disobedience and is grounds for disciplinary action.
6. Any staff or students who bring POEDs to school shall comply with Administrative Procedure 114 – Information Technology, including limitation of liability of personal information and files as well as network access procedures and expectations. Any staff or students who bring POEDs to school must also agree to and abide by the Employee Responsible Use Agreement, Student Digital Citizenship and Acceptable Use Agreement and the Personal Digital Device Responsible Use Agreement. The use of technology, whether that be personally owned digital devices or devices owned by the division, is a privilege and a distinct advantage when used responsibly. Failure to use technology responsibly and in a manner that demonstrates respect for others and themselves could result in cancellation of network privileges and may result in additional disciplinary or legal actions.

7. Staff may access division and/or personally owned mobile devices for instructional purposes during instructional time.
 - 7.1 Staff should be good role models by avoiding using their devices for personal reasons such as accessing social media during instructional time.
8. The Superintendent requires that all principals, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, formulate and implement procedures at their respective school sites to be consistent with the Holy Spirit BYOD School Protocol, as well as Alberta Education's BYOD Guide for Schools.
9. In the event of an emergency, such as a lock down or an evacuation, the Principal (or designate) will adhere to emergency protocols in informing the school community (students, staff and parents/guardians) of the acceptable use of POEDs in that emergency situation, adhering to instructions provided by emergency personnel.
 - 9.1 Principals are responsible for establishing and communicating expectations of the use of POEDs during emergency situations as part of emergency preparedness procedures.
10. POEDs are valuable electronic devices. The security, storage, charging and maintenance of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The division assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of POEDs.
 - 10.1 POEDs may be taken temporarily due to lack of responsible use or breach of the Digital Citizenship Agreement. POEDs will be securely stored until such time they are returned to the student or parent/guardian.

References **Sections 31, 51, 52, 53, 54, 196, 197, 222, *Education Act***
***Bring Your Own Devices: A Guide for Schools*, Alberta Education**
Ministerial Order (#014/2024)

