



Away for the Day

Use of Personal Mobile Devices in School for K-9 Students

Overview

CBE's "Away for the Day" guidelines apply to K-9 students and aligns with [Ministerial Order #014/2024](#): Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools. These guidelines will be communicated with parents and guardians each school year. The following documents may be referenced for context and clarity:

- **AR6008** - [Student Personal Mobile Devices](#)
- [FAQ – Student Personal Mobile Device Policy](#)
- **AR1062** - [Responsible Use of Electronic Information Resources](#)
- **AR6005** - [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- **AR6006** - [Progressive Student Discipline](#)

Definitions

Personal Mobile Device (PMD): Any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, gaming device, laptop, or smartwatch. This also may include devices capable of communicating with a PMD (e.g. Bluetooth devices) such as headphones, earbuds, or smart speakers.

School Community: means the inclusion of individuals or groups engaging with schools in learning or support of student learning and CBE.

Social Media: means web-based and mobile technologies or applications providing communications through interactive or social dialogue. Examples include but are not limited to apps, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, Internet Forums, instant messaging and social network aggregation platforms, such as Instagram, SnapChat, or TikTok.

Instructional Time – Includes time scheduled for the purposes of instruction, examination/testing, and other student activities where direct student-teacher interaction and supervision are maintained. Examples include but are not limited to: in-class instruction and activities, assemblies, guest speaker activities, and field trips.

Storing Personal Mobile Devices

Personal mobile devices brought to school must be powered off or set to silent mode and stored out of sight in student lockers, backpacks, or other designated areas. Students are not permitted to use social media applications via CBE networks on PMDs or CBE-owned devices inside the school during the school day.

Theft and Responsibility

Students who choose to bring personal mobile devices to school do so at their own risk. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner or user. CBE assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of student PMDs.

Communication Between Students and Parents

Parents are asked to refrain from contacting their child/student on their PMD during the school day to avoid unnecessary distraction. Parents can contact the school office who can facilitate contact with their child/student during the school day, if needed.

Exceptions

There may be exceptions granted by school administration allowing students to use personal mobile devices during school hours. These include:

- **Medical Reasons** - students with identified medical needs may require PMDs to monitor medical conditions. For example, diabetic monitoring.
- **Complex Learning Needs** - students with complex learning needs may require the use of personal mobile devices during instructional time. These accommodations will be outlined in the student's Individualized Program Plan (IPP).
- **Educational Purposes** - certain circumstances may warrant access to PMDs as determined by the school administration. For example, English as Additional Language Learners (EAL) accommodations.

Digital No Use Zones

Use of any digital devices including personal mobile devices in bathrooms and changing rooms is prohibited at all times.

Consequences for Inappropriate Use

Students are expected to follow [Administrative Regulation 6005: Student Code of Conduct](#). Students who refuse may be subject to [Administrative Regulation 6006: Progressive Student Discipline](#). Some schools have used a progressive response with specifically outlined steps, similar to the one provided below for instances where students have not respected the guidelines. Please note, the steps taken for progressive discipline are at the discretion of the Principal. Below is simply an example.

First Incident: Verbal Warning

Student is reminded of the expectations regarding responsible use of Personal Mobile Devices and/or social media.

Second Incident: Confiscation and Parent/Guardian Informed

Student will turn in the mobile device to the teacher, and it will be returned to the student at the end of the school day. Parent/guardian is informed by the teacher.

Third Incident: Confiscation and Parent/Guardian Involvement

Student will turn in the mobile device to the office and can retrieve the phone at the end of the school day from the office. An Administrator will contact the parents/guardians to inform them of the repeated infractions.

Fourth Incident: Loss of Privileges

Student will not bring the mobile device to school or will turn it into the office at the beginning of day and retrieve it when they leave for the day.

Further Incident(s) may result in other actions as determined by the administration in consultation with parent/guardian.

Research

As outlined in Alberta Education's [Engagement on Cellphone Use in Schools](#) survey administered in May 2024, 85.4% of the 65,301 respondents view cellphone use as negatively impacting academic achievement. 81.3% of respondents believe that cellphones in schools increase the number of bullying incidents while 58.6% of parents believe having a cellphone negatively impacts their child's mental health. These results coupled with scientific research formed the basis for [Ministerial Order #014/2024](#). Research referenced by Alberta Education in the document, [Use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools](#) outlines the use of personal mobile devices connected to poor academic performance, higher rates of cyberbullying, declining mental health, low self-esteem, sleep difficulties, and depression among youth. Key documents from [Alberta Education](#) include:

- [Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory, 2023](#)
- [Jon Haidt, The Case for Phone-Free Schools, June 6, 2023](#)
- [Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health, February 2024](#)
- [Cell Phones, Student Rights, and School Safety: Finding the Right Balance, Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 2021](#)
- [Study probes cell phone use among grade 5 students, March 25, 2024](#)