



Code I: Students

IDF Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Statement of Policy

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) is dedicated to fostering a focused and respectful learning environment in alignment with the Board's priorities and goals.

Catholic education helps all children in our division develop their God-given talents as they strive to reach their full potential spiritually, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally. Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools combines academic excellence and spiritual development with support for the physical wellness of each student. A well-rounded Catholic education engenders a strong sense of belonging and identity that helps students become contributing citizens in their communities (Board Priorities and Goals – Improving Student Learning and Achievement).

To support these goals, GSCS has established guidelines for the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of personal electronic devices during class time within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. This policy aims to foster an environment conducive to learning, free from the distractions that personal electronic devices may present, and to ensure that all students are fully engaged in their educational experience.

These procedures apply to all GSCS students during instructional time and include classroom spaces and other instructional areas, including off-campus instruction.

Definitions

Instructional Time: The period of time during which a class is in session.

Personal Electronic Devices: Includes any personal mobile device capable of making calls, sending messages, accessing the internet, or other digital media, including (but not limited to) smartphones, tablets, computers and portable video game systems.

Procedures/Guidelines

1 General Procedures

- 1.1 Students will keep personal electronic devices out of sight and on silent mode or off during instruction. This includes texting, calling, accessing social media, browsing the internet, or using any applications. Wearable technology (e.g., smartwatches) may be worn but must be configured to prevent distractions from alerts and/or communications.

Elementary school students are required to keep personal electronic devices out of sight and on silent mode or off for the entire school day, including recess and lunch breaks.

- 1.2 Use of personal electronic devices is prohibited in areas where there is an increased expectation of privacy (e.g., washrooms, changing rooms, private counselling rooms).

2 Exceptions

All requests for exceptions will be directed to the school principal (or designate). The classroom teacher may make the request on behalf of a student. The principal or designate may grant an exception based on:

- 2.1 **Educational Use:**
The use of personal electronic devices may be permitted for specific instructional or assessment purposes (Grades 9-12 only). In such cases, the teacher will clearly communicate the allowed use to students.
- 2.2 **Medical:**
Students with documented medical conditions that require the use of a mobile device must obtain prior approval from school administration (Kindergarten to Grade 12).
- 2.3 **Family Emergencies:**
In case of a family emergency, students must inform the teacher or school administration and may be granted temporary permission to use their electronic devices (Kindergarten to Grade 12).

3 Storage and Handling

Students must keep their electronic devices turned off or on silent and stored in their lockers, bags or out of sight on their person. While at school, personal technology remains the responsibility of the owner. Schools are not responsible for students' personal electronic devices in the event of loss, damage or theft.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 **Teachers:**
 - Enforce the *Use of Personal Electronic Devices* policy consistently and fairly.
 - Direct requests for exceptions to the school principal or designate as per exemptions outlined above.
 - Communicate the policy and any exceptions clearly to students.
 - Teach and model responsible digital citizenship.

- 4.2 Students:
- Adhere to the cell phone policy and store and/or adjust settings on devices as required.
 - Refrain from using personal electronic devices during instructional time unless permitted by the teacher.
 - Practice responsible digital citizenship.
- 4.3 Parents/Caregivers:
- Communicate with the classroom teacher, school principal or designate regarding any circumstances that may require exceptions as outlined within policy.
 - Be aware of the expectations set out regarding the use of personal electronic devices.
 - Understand that students do not have access to their personal electronic devices during instructional time (no access during the whole day for elementary school students) and will be unable to respond promptly to calls or texts.
 - Contact the main office during instructional time with any emergent communication that is required.
- 4.4 School Administration:
- Review these procedures annually with staff, students and parents/caregivers.
 - Support all staff with the administration and enforcement of these procedures consistent with the parameters outlined in Ministry policy, *Personal Electronic Devices: Responsible Use in Schools – Policy, guidelines and model administrative procedure*.
 - Review and respond to requests for exceptions.

5 Communication

These procedures will be communicated to all students, parents/caregivers, and staff members at the beginning of each school year and upon any revisions.

References

- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. *Digital Citizenship in Saskatchewan Schools*, 2015.
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. *Personal Electronic Devices: Responsible Use in Schools*, 2024.

Date Approved

September 2024