

Administrative Procedure 351

Safe Schools: The Use of Electronic Communication, Social Media, and Mobile Devices by Students



The use of a range of communications technologies and social media continues to increase in our schools and communities at an enormous rate. The proliferation of the internet has created unprecedented opportunities for a range of purposes – to access unlimited information, and to communicate spontaneously with a virtually infinite audience, from personal recipients to a global, anonymous public. The world-wide web has changed our world, offering an unparalleled resource, but also associated challenges.

Mobile technology can be a very powerful and useful tool for teaching and learning. The use of such technology in the classroom needs to be governed by the teacher and will be dependent on the activities occurring in class. Cell phones and other mobile technology including wearable technology can be disruptive if they are activated in class when they are not being used for class-related activities. In addition, the use of digital cameras in cell phones and other wearable technology can be used in a manner that violates the privacy and dignity of others. Communication devices also have the potential to be used for academic dishonesty.

As the technology has expanded at an astounding rate, so have the implications related to safety, privacy, and intrusion in our schools and communities.

This administrative procedure acknowledges the attributes of the emergent technologies as educational and communication tools, and devices which are seen as promoting safety, while recognizing that these devices can be used in a negative way, which can potentially impact on safe, caring, and orderly schools. This administrative procedure is intended to support our Digital Citizenship (AP 146), Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), and technology renewal plan.

Related Administrative Procedures:

AP146: Digital Citizenship

AP350: Codes of Conduct

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AP358: Student Suspension

AP359: Student Expulsion

AP444 Use of Social Media

AP376 Student Human Rights, Incidents, and Complaints

AP356 Bullying Prevention and Intervention

AP 407 Violence in the Workplace

Police/School Board Protocol 2011

Community Threat Assessment Protocol 2011

1. Principal's Duty and Responsibilities

1.1. The Principal has a duty to maintain order and discipline in the school.

1.1.1. A "school" is defined in The Education Act, Section 1, as "the body of elementary school pupils or secondary school pupils that is organized as a unit for educational purposes under the jurisdiction of the appropriate board".

1.2. The Principal will determine whether off-school use of the internet, or other electronic devices is a school matter, due to its impact on the school climate, in consultation with the area supervisor.

1.2.1. The Principal will alert the social media platform of the misuse of the tool. Examples of when this may be necessary may include: impersonating a school account or person, cases of bullying, any negative messages or behaviours which are "injurious to the moral tone of the school". The Principal will notify their Supervisor that notice to the platform has been given.

1.2.2. The Principal may consider such factors as the following in determining



whether off-school conduct impacts school climate: evidence that the person or persons who have been threatened/intimidated are consequently impaired in their ability to progress in their studies, activities or duties at school; whether criminal charges have been laid; whether the perpetrator has conditions of the court placed upon them in regard to attending school; whether the off school conduct is “injurious to the moral tone of the school” and/or affects school safety and security.

- 1.3. If the Principal determines that certain off school conduct has had, or is having, a negative impact on the school climate, they may impose discipline in accordance with Board policies and procedures (see AP 358).

2. Student Behaviour

- 2.1. Students are accountable for their behaviour off school property, which has a negative impact on the school climate (as per 1.3.0) and harms the tone or dynamics of the school or the safety or security of its members.
- 2.2. Where a student uses the internet or other technologies to threaten, harass or demean another member, or members, of the school community, and where this action interferes with the member’s or members’ safety or ability to function in the school (as per 1.3.0), the student shall be subject to Board policies and procedures.
- 2.3. Students are responsible for activity and content on the internet accessed by their passwords; consequently, students should not share their passwords with other users.
- 2.4. Prohibited uses of technology include, but are not limited to:
 - Personal use that is not limited and/or occasional or that incurs costs to the board
 - Use that violates federal or provincial laws

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- Use of Board Technology for commercial or political purposes
- Use that contravenes Board Policies or Procedures
- Theft of resources, including electronic data theft
- Unauthorized access, alteration, destruction, removal and/or disclosure of data. This includes the unauthorized disclosure of Board email addresses, distribution of lists, and user account information
- Unauthorized access or disclosure of confidential information
- Creating, displaying, storing or sending fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate or unlawful materials
- Cyber-bullying or bullying by electronic means includes, (a) creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person; (b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and (c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals
- Copying, downloading, transferring, broadcasting, streaming, renaming, adding or deleting information protected under copyright law
- Use that could reasonably be expected to impair the Board's computing facilities or interfere with others' use of Board technology (e.g. viruses, spam, malware) including the sending of electronic "chain" mail
- Agreeing to license or download material for which a fee is charged to the Board without obtaining express written permission from the Board's Learning Technology Support Services staff. Purchasing of materials and services must comply with the procurement policies and procedures



- Taking or posting videos/photos or audio recordings without the individual's consent, and if they are under the age of 18, without the consent of their parent/guardian

3. Cell Phone, Wearable, and Mobile Technology Devices

3.1. Students in Grades 7 to 12 must keep their personal mobile devices stored out of sight and either powered off or set to silent mode during instructional time, except when an educator grants explicit permission for use under the specified circumstances

- Students in Grade 6 and below, the policy is even more stringent, requiring that personal mobile devices remain stored out of view and powered off or set to silent mode throughout the entire instructional day, except in the cases outlined by the educator.
- All members of the school community are prohibited from using personal mobile devices during instructional time, except under the following conditions:
 - o For educational purposes, as directed by an educator
 - o For health and medical reasons
 - o To support special education needs

3.1.1. Cell phones, wearable, and other mobile technology are restricted in the school setting, in general, and use is prohibited in areas where there is an increased expectation of privacy (e.g., washrooms, change-rooms).

3.2. Unless a school sanctioned activity or event, the taking of photographic images or videos/ audio recordings of a person or persons, on school property, at school events, and during school activities and/or hours, is prohibited without the permission of the person or persons being photographed/ recorded, the permission of their parent or guardian if they are minors, and the principal or designate.



3.3. The electronic transmission or posting of photographic images/ recordings of a person or persons on school property, at school events, and during school activities and/or hours, is prohibited without the permission of the person or persons being photographed/ recorded, the principal or designate, and where the student is below the age of 18, the consent of the parent/guardian.

3.3.1. Violations under section 3 will be dealt with according to Board and school policies, procedures, and protocols.

4. Loss, Theft or Confiscation of Devices

4.1. The school is not responsible for students' personal electronic devices in the event of loss, damage, or theft.

4.2. Where a student violates this policy, the device may be confiscated and returned to the parent or guardian (or student 18 years of age and older) after the instructional day, or as appropriate.

4.3. Where information that could pertain to issues of safety and/or criminal activity is believed to exist on cell phones, wearable technology, or other mobile devices, the devices may be accessed, the information may be reviewed, and the devices may be confiscated for further investigation by the school and by police authorities.

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Legal References:

Education Act, s. 306(1)

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, s. 14.(1),(2)