



## PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA

### Background

Golden Hills School Division is committed to fostering a safe, caring, respectful and focused learning environment. By establishing clear guidelines for the responsible use of cell phones and personal mobile devices Golden Hills seeks to continue to optimize learning, while minimizing distractions, and protecting privacy and academic integrity.

This Administrative Procedure is implemented in response to the Minister of Education, mandating that all school divisions limit student use of personal mobile devices during instructional time as well as access to social media on school networks or on school devices.

Staff, students, parents and administration are expected to work together to ensure that the requirements and procedures in this Administrative Procedure are adhered to.

### Definitions

**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.

**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.

**Personal Mobile Devices:** Means any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet or cellular network, including but not limited to a cellphone, tablet, computer, gaming device, or smartwatch.

**Social Media:** Refers to online platforms that allow people to create, share, and interact with content through virtual communities and networks.

**Examples of social media platforms:** Facebook, Instagram, X (Formerly Twitter), TikTok, Snapchat, and others.

### Procedures

1. School Authority
  - 1.1. Schools have the right to regulate the use of Personal Mobile Devices during Instructional Time and Non-Instructional Time, on school property, or during school sponsored activities.
2. General Restrictions
  - 2.1. Use of Personal Mobile Devices: Students are not permitted to use personal mobile devices during instructional time. Except if permitted in Section 2 Limited Use Exception.
    - 2.1.1. Kindergarten to grade 6 students are required to keep their Personal Mobile Devices powered off or silent and stored out of view throughout the school day (including Non-Instructional Time).
    - 2.1.2. Grade 7 to grade 12 students are required to keep their Personal Mobile Devices powered off or silent and stored in a location as determined by the Principal (i.e. locker, backpack, cell phone storage) during Instructional Time.
  - 2.2. Access to Social Media

Students are prohibited from accessing social media on school networks or devices.

3. Limited Use Exceptions
  - 3.1. Health or Medical Reasons: Limited use of Personal Mobile Devices is permitted for health or medical reasons, as determined/approved by a principal.
    - 3.1.1. Accommodations to support, monitor, or regulate an identified health and/or medical condition as per a student's school medical plan as determined/approved by the principal. (In consultation with parents, healthcare professionals, and educational consultants) see [AP 312 Students with Severe Medical Conditions](#).
  - 3.2. Special Learning Needs: Limited use of Personal Mobile Devices is allowed to support special learning needs, as determined/approved by the principal.
    - 3.2.1. Accommodations to support an identified inclusive educational need (accessibility and accommodation need), including mental health need as per the student's individual program plan, individual support plan, behavior support plan, as determined/approved by the principal; (In consultation with parents, healthcare professionals, and educational consultants)
  - 3.3. A formal request for exemption must be submitted by the parent or guardian, accompanied by documentation from a healthcare provider or relevant specialist. The request and associated documentation will be reviewed by the principal in consultation with the Educational Consultant in order to assess appropriate and reasonable accommodation options.
    - 3.3.1. Approved exemptions will be documented, and teachers will be informed of the necessary accommodations to ensure that the student's learning needs are met while maintaining a respectful learning environment. All exemptions must follow Administrative Procedures for proper use of technology and focus on either supporting the student's educational or medical needs.
  - 3.4. Educational or Other Purposes: Personal Mobile Devices may be used for educational or other purposes, as determined by the principal. Teachers will seek the principal's approval to grant access for educational purposes.
    - 3.4.1. Limited access to Personal Mobile Devices may be granted for specific educational purposes, as determined by the principal.
    - 3.4.2. Limited access to social media may be granted for specific educational purposes, as determined by the principal.
    - 3.4.3. In the event of an emergency, the principal or designate will communicate acceptable use of Personal Mobile Devices.
  - 3.5. The Principal may formulate and implement Personal Mobile Device procedures at the school site. All student use of Personal Mobile Devices is expected to follow the requirements set out herein.
  - 3.6. The Principal shall report any exceptions, accommodations or site-specific procedures related to AP 145 to Division Office Administration to ensure that this procedure and its requirements are being consistently interpreted in all Division schools. If a school-site procedure is inconsistent with the requirements set out herein, AP 145 shall govern.
4. Storage of Personal Mobile Devices:
  - 4.1. Students in kindergarten to grade 6 are required to keep their Personal Mobile Devices powered off or silent and stored out of view throughout the school day (including non-instructional time). Devices can be stored in lockers or designated locations determined by the principal. Principals will communicate these locations to students and parents.
  - 4.2. Students in grade 7 to grade 12 are required to keep their Personal Mobile Devices powered off or silent and stored out of view during instructional time. Devices must be stored in lockers or in designated locations determined by the principal. Principals will communicate these locations to students and parents/guardians.
  - 4.3. The security and storage of Personal Mobile Devices is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The school division is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged Personal Mobile Devices unless gross negligence is proven.

- 4.4. Temporarily confiscated (surrendered) Personal Mobile Devices must be securely store by staff in a manner that allows the students to identify their Personal Mobile Device, such as a cell phone hotel / pocket organizer.
5. Social Media Platforms:
  - 5.1. Golden Hills will maintain an updated list of social media platforms that are restricted from school networks and devices.
  - 5.2. The restricted platforms currently include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok. Please click this link for a complete list of restricted platforms on Golden Hills networks and devices.
6. Disciplinary Measures:
  - 6.1. A progressive discipline approach will be employed to address violations, in alignment with [AP 350 Safe and Caring Schools, Student Conduct and Discipline](#).
  - 6.2. Discipline for inappropriate possession and/or usage, shall be progressive and may include:
    - 6.2.1. Warning a student and asked to put it away;
    - 6.2.2. conversation with student and/or parents/guardians;
    - 6.2.3. temporary confiscation, where student or parent may regain access/collect the Personal Mobile Device at the end of the Instructional Time and/or school day where appropriate; and/or
    - 6.2.4. prohibition of the Personal Mobile Device on school property
7. Notification Process:
  - 7.1. Parents/guardians will be contacted if their child is found to be in violation of the school authority's procedures.
8. Emergency Situations
  - 8.1. In the event of an emergency, such as a lockdown or evacuation, the principal will develop procedures and inform the school community of the acceptable use of Personal Mobile Devices in that situation.
9. Roles and Responsibilities
  - 9.1. Students Responsibilities: Adhere to the guidelines set out in this administrative procedure.
  - 9.2. Staff Responsibilities: Ensure students and parents/guardians are aware of this administrative procedure. Educate students about the appropriate use of Personal Mobile Devices and social media.
  - 9.3. Parents/Guardians Responsibilities: Demonstrate support for the administrative procedures by discussing it with their children to ensure understanding. Work collaboratively with school staff to address any concerns
10. Annual Review and Communication Process
  - 10.1. Individual schools will communicate this administrative procedure annually to staff, students, parents, and school community through their regular communication process, which may include social media, meetings, newsletters, and the school's website. This administrative procedure will be readily accessible to the school community and the public via the Golden Hills website.

**Reference:**

- AP 312 Students with Severe Medical Conditions
- AP 350 Safe and Caring Environments, Student Conduct, and Discipline
- AP 391 Digital Citizenship
- Education Act. AS.A 2012
- Ministerial Order (#14/2024)