

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Students

Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media

STU #39

Revised: May 2025

Background

Our Catholic faith calls us to foster a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment where people and relationships are valued. We prioritize face-to-face interaction and the reduction of distractions that interrupt learning and faith experiences in our classrooms. We aim to create a culture around the use of technology that teaches and protects our students, promotes responsible decision-making and sustained attention, while supporting their mental health.

Background Section 31 of the Education Act of Alberta (Act) establishes foundational guidelines for student conduct, emphasizing the importance of creating a positive educational environment. Section 33.1(d) further underscores the responsibility of school boards to ensure that every student and staff member experiences a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment that embraces diversity and fosters a sense of belonging. This commitment extends to promoting the well-being of all members within the school division.

Students are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold behaviors that contribute positively to school culture, recognizing that any conduct which disrupts or distracts from learning, whether within the school premises, during instructional time, or through electronic means, is deemed unacceptable.

As stated in the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools frequently asked questions document from Alberta Education, “The prevalence of personal mobile devices in classrooms has been associated with increased distraction among students and instances of inappropriate usage, both of which negatively impact learning and mental health.” Acknowledging these challenges, there is a shared commitment to cultivating a distraction-free learning environment that supports children's and students' well-being, enhances engagement, and reduces opportunities for negative social interactions.

This Administrative Procedure provides parameters for the proper use of cell phones and social media in CTR schools, as well as restrictions and exceptions. It also outlines required steps to allow for appropriate use of technology in classrooms that enhance learning and contribute to a safe, caring, respectful, distraction free, and engaging classroom environment. Additional Administrative Procedures related to Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media include: [Student Conduct And Discipline Process](#), [Suspension and Expulsions](#), [Anti-Bullying](#), [Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environments](#).

1. Definitions

- 1.1. Instructional Time: Time during a scheduled class, inside or outside of the school, where teachers take responsibility for ensuring that learning activities for students are directed toward achieving the outcomes from the program of study. This includes when students briefly leave the classroom for washroom or other breaks.
- 1.2. Non-instructional Time at School: Time during the school day when students are not scheduled to be with a teacher. This includes immediately before and after school, breaks, lunchtime as well as during extracurricular events. This administrative procedure does not apply when students are at home.
- 1.3. Personal Mobile Device: A personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.
- 1.4. Social Media: As defined by Fortinet, CTR Catholic's firewall provider, a social networking site is a platform to build social networks or social relations among people who share similar interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his or her social links, and a variety of additional services. Social network sites are web-based services that allow individuals to create a public profile, create a list of users with whom to share connections, and view and cross the connections within the system.

2. Personal Mobile Devices During Instructional Time

- 2.1. Students may not use personal mobile devices during instructional time.
- 2.2. If students have a personal mobile device, they are required to keep these devices silent or powered off and stored out of view during instructional time.
- 2.3. Under the authority of the principal, teachers may use their professional judgment to determine where personal mobile devices should be stored, based on the grade, subject area, student developmental abilities, and anticipated need for use during class time. Students will store personal mobile devices during instructional times away from their view in locations such as lockers, backpacks, or a centralized location in the classroom. Teachers will communicate the expectations regarding storage to students.

3. Exceptions Include:

- 3.1. The use of personal mobile devices for health or medical reasons or to support special learning needs. To coordinate this exception, parents shall make the request to the school principal. This information will be documented in the student Individual Support Plan or Medical Plan.
- 3.2. Under the authority of the principal, teachers may use their professional judgement to allow the use of personal mobile devices for educational purposes. When teachers allow students to use personal mobile devices, they shall identify when the personal mobile devices are to be retrieved from storage, used, and returned to storage.
- 3.3. Whenever teachers allow students' personal devices to be used for a required educational purpose, students without a personal device may be provided with a school device (in most cases, a Chromebook) to complete the educational task.

4. Social Media

4.1. Students may not access social media on school networks or on school devices.

4.1.1. CTR Catholic restricts access to websites that are deemed inappropriate for K-12 education and those that fall under the social media definition provided in section 1.4 of this administrative procedure. To verify if a website is blocked because it is social media, type the website's name into the [Fortinet webpage](#). Websites categorized as social networking are blocked by default, with exceptions noted in section 3.2.

4.2. Limited access to social media may be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent.

5. Personal Mobile Devices During Non-Instructional Time

5.1. For non-instructional time, schools will develop expectations and requirements that outline if, when and how students are permitted to use personal mobile devices. These expectations will be communicated to students and parents. Students are encouraged to engage in face-to-face interactions, activities, and relationships to support full participation in school life.

6. Consequences

6.1. Students who fail to adhere to the Cell Phone and Social Media Policy are subject to the [Student Conduct and Discipline Process](#).

6.2. As stated in the Student Conduct and Discipline Process administrative procedure:

Each school is expected to apply a school discipline process that reflects the following characteristics:

6.2.1. parental contact is required;

6.2.2. parents are respectfully brought into the discipline process and apprised of both consequences and interventions, as appropriate, with the understanding that teachers and administrators are responsible for final decisions;

6.2.3. consequences for inappropriate behavior are logically connected to offenses;

6.2.4. consequences for inappropriate behavior escalate in seriousness and consider the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances;

6.2.5. interventions are put in place to prevent further indiscretions whenever possible, and practical;

6.2.6. restorative practices are used whenever appropriate; and

6.2.7. support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behavior as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behavior.

7. Annual Notification

7.1. Administrators will annually communicate a summary of this administrative procedure to parents, including a hyperlink to the full document. They will also communicate a summary of this administrative procedure to staff and students alongside all other relevant expectations, routines, and procedures that contribute to making schools safe, caring and welcoming.

8. Roles And Responsibilities

8.1. Students: Students are responsible for adhering to the guidelines set out in this administrative procedure by keeping their personal mobile devices silent or powered off and stored out of view during instructional time. Students must not access social media on school networks or devices.

- 8.2. Parents: Parents demonstrate support for creating a distraction-free learning environment by ensuring their children understand and follow this administrative procedure. Parents are encouraged to engage with the school if their child violates the policy, working collaboratively with teachers and administrators to address any issues. Parents are responsible for student use of personal mobile devices and social media outside of school.
- 8.3. Teachers: Teachers are responsible for adhering to this administrative procedure and use professional judgment when allowing for limited use of personal mobile devices in their classrooms. Teachers shall communicate to students when personal mobile devices can be used and ensure they are returned to storage afterward. Teachers shall support the exceptions for personal mobile devices that are required for student learning and medical needs.
- 8.4. Administrators: Administrators are responsible for overseeing the implementation of this administrative procedure, ensuring that all staff, students, and parents are aware of the procedure. They must also manage and document exceptions for health, medical reasons, or special learning needs, and ensure that this procedure is communicated to staff, parents and students annually.