



ALBERTA

EDUCATION
Office of the Minister

GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MINISTERIAL ORDER (#014/2024)

Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools

WHEREAS the use of personal mobile devices in schools can be a source of distraction that can negatively impact children's and students' mental health, engagement, and learning;

WHEREAS students are entitled to welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and nurture a sense of belonging and a positive sense of self, and the use of personal mobile devices can be used to harm, bully, and otherwise compromise this environment;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta wishes to improve learning outcomes by supporting a distraction-free learning environment that promotes children's and students' wellbeing and limits opportunities for bullying;

THEREFORE I, Demetrios Nicolaides, the Minister of Education, pursuant to s. 18(2)(b) of the *Education Act*, hereby make the Order in the attached Appendix, being the Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools.

This Order comes into effect on September 1, 2024.

DATED at **Calgary**, Alberta **June 20**, 2024.

Demetrios Nicolaides

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools

Definitions

1. In these Standards,
 - a. “personal mobile device” means any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch;
 - b. “school authority” means any Alberta public or separate school board, Francophone regional authority, charter board, operator of private school, or private early childhood services operator;

General Restrictions

2. A school authority is required to, at a minimum, limit the use of personal mobile devices and restrict access to social media as follows:
 - a. Children and students may not use personal mobile devices during instructional time. If children and students have personal mobile devices with them during instructional time, they are required to keep these devices on silent or powered off, and stored out of view; and
 - b. Children and students may not access social media on school networks or on school devices.

A school authority may further limit the use of personal mobile devices and social media, so long as it otherwise complies with these Standards, including the Limited Use Exceptions in section 3, below.

Limited Use Exceptions

3. A school authority is required to allow for the following limited use exceptions:
 - a. Limited use of personal mobile devices must be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent, for health or medical reasons or to support special learning needs;
 - b. Limited use of personal mobile devices may be permitted for educational or other purposes, as determined by a principal or equivalent; and
 - c. Limited access to social media may be permitted, as determined by a principal or equivalent.

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School Authority Policies and/or Procedures

4. A school authority is required to have policies and/or procedures relating to the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools that comply with these Standards no later than January 1, 2025. A school authority may achieve this by developing new policies or procedures, or by incorporating these Standards into existing policies and/or procedures.
5. A school authority's policies and/or procedures are required to:
 - a. Set out the General Restrictions and Limited Use Exceptions in sections 2 and 3, above.
 - b. Address the location(s) and/or manner(s) in which personal mobile devices are to be stored out of view for the purposes of these Standards;
 - c. Address what constitutes "social media" for this purpose of these Standards;
 - d. Incorporate a progressive discipline approach to address violations. The progressive discipline approach is required to include notification to the parent of a child or student who is found to have violated the school authority's policies and/or procedure; and
 - e. Set out the roles and responsibilities of staff, children and students, parents, and other members of the school community in ensuring compliance with the policies and/or procedures.
6. A school authority is required to clearly communicate the policies and/or procedures to staff, children and students, parents, and other members of the school community annually and is required to ensure that the policies and/or procedures are readily accessible to the school community and/or public.