

Mobile Devices and Social Media

Background

Golden Hills School Division is committed to fostering a safe, caring, respectful and focused learning environment. In accordance with Alberta Government Ministerial Order (Standards for the use of personal mobile devices and social media in schools). This administrative procedure regulates personal mobile devices and social media use within our schools to ensure online safety, optimize learning, minimize distractions, and protect privacy and academic integrity.

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, such as 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.

SHS Restrictions and Limited Use Exceptions *(adapted from GHSD Administrative Procedure)*

1. Students are prohibited from accessing social media on school networks or devices.
2. SHS students are required to keep their phones powered off or silent and stored out of view during instructional time unless:
 - a. *Health or Medical Reasons*: Limited use of personal mobile devices is permitted for health or medical reasons, as determined by school administration (In consultation with parents, healthcare professionals, and educational consultants) as indicated in a student's school medical plan.
 - b. *Special Learning Needs*: Limited use of personal mobile devices is allowed to support an identified inclusive educational need including mental health needs as per the student's individual program plan, individual support plan, behavior support plan as determined by school administration. (In consultation with parents, healthcare professionals, and educational consultants)
 - c. *Educational or Other Purposes*: Personal mobile devices may be used for educational or other purposes, as determined by school administration. Teachers need to speak with an administrator regarding these educational purposes and decide together if the use is appropriate or not. Moving forward, administration may grant teachers the autonomy to use professional judgment to allow the use of mobile devices for educational purposes.

Mobile Devices and Social Media

Disciplinary Measures

A progressive discipline approach will be employed to address violations, in alignment with AP 350 Safe and Caring Schools, Student Conduct and Discipline.

1. Discipline for inappropriate possession and/or usage:
 - a. Warning given to the student and they are directed to put the device away.
 - b. Conversation with the student and parents/guardians notified.
 - c. Temporary confiscation of the device, the student is directed to administration to discuss a change in device use, parents/guardians are notified, a plan moving forward is documented in PowerSchool. This third instance could result in prohibition of devices on school property and/or student suspension.
 - d. Prohibition of devices on school property and/or student suspension.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a personal mobile device (PDM)?

Personal mobile device (PDM) means any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as a cellphone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.

2. What does Golden Hills School Division (GHSD) believe about the use of PMDs in schools?

GHSD believes that technology can enhance instruction and learning when supporting curricular outcomes and not being a distraction. GHSD teachers will continue to utilize technology when it benefits or enhances the achievement of learning outcomes.

3. What are the expectations for PMD use?

Grade 10 to Grade 12 students are required to keep their phones powered off or silent and stored out of view during instructional time.

4. What are the limited use exceptions for PMDs?

Health or Medical Reasons: Limited use of personal mobile devices is permitted for health or medical reasons, as determined/approved by a principal.

Special Learning Needs: Limited use of personal mobile devices is allowed to support special learning needs, as determined/approved by the principal.

5. How can I leave a message for my child?

As always, families can contact the school office to relay a message to a student.

6. What if there is an emergency?

Families will be notified of emergent situations via personal phone call or school messenger. Students needing to contact a caregiver regarding an urgent matter during instructional time should speak with their teacher in order to use a phone designated for student use in the school offices.

Mobile Devices and Social Media

7. Can my child bring their personal laptop/tablet to school?

Yes. Learners can bring their personal laptop/tablet to school if it is being used for instructional purposes as directed by the teacher. Any misuse of a personal laptop/tablet is subject to the procedures outlined in AP145.

8. Can my child use their PMD during extracurricular activities?

Personal mobile device usage during extracurricular events is at the discretion of the teacher or coach and should be made clear to students at the outset of the event. Examples of extracurricular events might include sports, clubs, band concerts, practices, etc.