



## School District No. 51 (Boundary)

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June 6, 2024

### **RE: Restrictions on personal digital devices**

Dear School District 51 Families,

On January 26th, 2024, the Government of British Columbia announced [three actions](#) for the safety and well-being of students in relation to digital technology. The announcement included restrictions on the use of personal digital devices in schools, including cell phones, tablet computers, smart watches and portable video game systems. These restrictions must be in place for the 2024-25 school year.

Research has shown that frequent digital device interruptions in the classroom (especially social media notifications), along with the addictive nature of social media platforms and the rise of cyberbullying, are having a negative impact on the learning environment and on the well-being of students.

In many cases, the use of these personal devices during instructional time is already restricted in SD 51. However, there will now be a consistent application of these restrictions as mandated by the Province. To meet government expectations, the Board of Education in School District No. 51 (Boundary) has amended its District Code of Conduct policy to include personal digital devices (please see #6 on page 2 of the attached Policy 310: Student Conduct Expectations). The exception to these restrictions will be for students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Learning Support Plan (LSP), or a health issue that specifically outlines the need for these devices for full inclusion in specific learning activities.

Students in SD 51 currently have access to school/district-owned internet-enabled devices such as Chromebooks, computer labs, laptops and iPads. We will continue to leverage this technology to enhance learning opportunities and develop good digital citizenship.

***Effective September 1st, 2024, students will be expected to adhere to the following minimum restrictions on the use of personal digital devices:***

**Elementary:** No access to or use of personal devices at any time during the school day. This is essentially a restriction from the moment the student arrives on school grounds until they leave school grounds at the end of the day. Parents are reminded that elementary students are always under direct supervision, and that the school will communicate with home for any emergent need that arises.

**Secondary:** Access to and the use of personal digital devices at the secondary level will not be permitted during instructional time. At the teacher's discretion, an exemption may be made when the use of such devices supports a specific curricular objective and is part of instructional planning. Secondary schools will follow up with further information for their school communities.

**Security & Storage:**

It is important to note that security and storage of personal digital devices is the sole responsibility of the owner/user. The District assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair or replacement of such devices. If students must bring a device to school, they are encouraged to ensure they are locked away in lockers (if available) or kept in a secure location.

This proposed policy will be circulating until Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> when it will be brought back to the Policy Committee. The Board of Education values comments on policies from all partners and/or individuals. If you have any comments or suggestions, please email them to [info@sd51.bc.ca](mailto:info@sd51.bc.ca) .

Once the policy has been adopted, the District will direct each school to update their Student Code of Conduct to be in alignment with the policy direction.

We encourage you to discuss this change with your child(ren) before the upcoming school year.

If you have any questions, please contact your school's administration.

Sincerely,



Anna Lautard