

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICE PROCEDURE

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to ensuring the responsible use of personal mobile devices (PMDs) to support educational goals and maintain a positive learning environment.

The appropriate use of personal mobile devices can enhance the educational experience by providing students with access to digital resources, facilitating collaborative learning, and supporting personalized learning plans. Aligning with PPM 128 ensures that these devices are used in a way that maximizes educational benefits. HWDSB ensures consistency in the rules and expectations across all schools within the board. This consistency helps in creating a predictable and fair environment for all students and staff.

TERMINOLOGY:

Educational Use: Personal mobile devices may be used in the classroom for educational purposes, as directed by the teacher. This includes accessing educational resources, collaborating on assignments, and other activities that support learning objectives.

Health and Medical Reasons: The use of personal mobile devices for health or medical reasons during instructional time as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Safe Intervention Plan (SIP) and/or Plan of Care.

Non-Educational Use: The use of personal mobile devices for non-educational purposes during instructional time is generally prohibited. This includes texting, social media, gaming, and other activities not related to learning.

Personal Mobile Device (PMD): As defined in Ontario's Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 128, PMDs are electronic devices that can be used for various communication, educational, and entertainment purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches, and other portable computing devices that can store, access, and transmit data.

PROCEDURES:

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure outlines HWDSB's approach to PPM 128 and the acceptable use of personal mobile devices within schools. It includes guidelines for managing their use to ensure they support educational goals and maintain a positive learning environment.
- 1.2 The procedure helps in teaching students about the responsible use of technology. By setting clear guidelines and consequences, students learn to use their devices

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appropriately and understand the implications of misuse. The procedure communicates expectations to parents and caregivers, fostering a partnership between the school and the home.

- 1.3 The procedure provides a framework for progressive discipline, ensuring that consequences for misuse of personal mobile devices are fair, consistent, and appropriate. This approach helps in addressing behavioural issues effectively while considering mitigating factors.

2.0 Implementation

- 2.1 Restricting the use of personal mobile devices during instructional time helps to minimize distractions, allowing students to focus on learning activities. This contributes to a positive and productive learning environment.
 - 2.1.1 Kindergarten - Grade 8: Students must have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) throughout the full instructional day, including nutrition breaks, unless permitted by the educator.
 - 2.1.2 Grades 9-12: Students must have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) during instructional time unless permitted by the educator.
 - 2.1.3 All individuals cannot record, take or share non-consensual recordings or photos of members of the school community.
- 2.2 Students Who Require Access to a Personal Device for Special Education or Health/Medical Supports and Services.
 - 2.2.1 HWDSB will uphold Human Rights, Safety and Well-being by supporting all students to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities. According to their Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Behaviour Support Plan (BSP), Safe Intervention Plan (SIP) and/or Plan of Care students may require access to personal devices for Special Education and/or health/medical supports and services. This ensures that all students have the necessary tools to support their learning, dignity, inclusion, full participation and well-being.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All school community members are responsible for upholding the HWDSB Personal Mobile Device Procedure. Violations of the procedure will be addressed through relevant policy and legislation.

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3.1 School Boards

- 3.1.1 Develop a local procedure setting out how they will enforce the restrictions on student use of personal mobile devices at school. The procedure must comply with the board's obligations under the Education Act and other relevant provincial policy and legislation.
- 3.1.2 Create an annual notification sent to parents and students reminding them of the procedure, its requirements and consequences for non-compliance.
- 3.1.3 Foster a collaborative approach by involving principals/vice-principals, teachers, students, parents, and IT staff in the development and review of the procedure.
- 3.1.4 Collaborate with external organizations such as local law enforcement or cyber-safety experts to enhance the procedure and provide additional support.
- 3.1.5 Review the procedure's effectiveness regularly through surveys, feedback and incident reports and make necessary adjustments.
- 3.1.6 Offer training and resources for teachers on how to effectively integrate personal mobile devices into their teaching practices.

3.2 Principals' Roles/Responsibilities

- 3.2.1 Communicate the procedure requirements and consequences for non-compliance to students, parents/caregivers and staff through meetings, newsletters, emails and the school website.
- 3.2.2 Investigate each occurrence and apply the principles of progressive discipline, while considering mitigating factors, up to and including suspension.
- 3.2.3 Provide ongoing support and guidance to teachers and staff in managing and integrating PMD in the classroom.

3.3 Educators and School Staff

- 3.3.1 Communicate the procedure requirements and consequences for non-compliance to students, and parents/caregivers through meetings, newsletters, emails and the school website.
- 3.3.2 Integrate the use of personal mobile devices into their teaching strategies where appropriate and ensure that their use aligns with educational objectives.

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- 3.3.3 Personal mobile devices can enhance learning when used appropriately. Schools are encouraged to develop strategies that integrate technology into the curriculum to support student learning and engagement.

3.4 Students

- 3.4.1 Must adhere to the school's policies regarding the use of personal mobile devices. They should use these devices responsibly and only for educational purposes during instructional time (when permitted).
- 3.4.2 Kindergarten - Grade 8: Students must have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) throughout the full instructional day, including nutrition breaks, unless explicitly permitted by the educator.
- 3.4.3 Grades 9-12: Students must have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) during instructional time unless permitted by the educator.

3.5 Parents/Caregivers

- 3.5.1 Support the school's policies by reinforcing appropriate use of personal mobile devices at home and encouraging their children to use them responsibly.
- 3.5.2 Should a parent need to contact their child, they can communicate with the main office.

4.0 Progressive Discipline Protocol

Schools will enforce the policy on the use of personal mobile devices. Violations of the policy may result in consequences, which can include confiscation of the device, communication with parents/caregivers, and other disciplinary actions as outlined in the school's code of conduct.

4.1 In all cases

- 4.1.1 The student is responsible for their personal mobile device (PMD), how they use it and the consequences of not following HWDSB's procedure for personal mobile device use.
- 4.1.2 Students have the option to store them in their lockers or not bring them to school.

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4.2 Response Protocol

- 4.2.1 If a student is found using their personal mobile device during instructional time or the instructional day, as described above, the following progressive discipline protocol can apply. The actions for progressive incidents listed below should assist schools in creating their own responses. Enter investigation notes and the record of communication with families/caregivers/FOS SOSA into Log Notes in PowerSchool.
- 4.2.2 Schools will enforce the procedure on the use of personal mobile devices. Violations of this procedure may result in consequences, which can include Actions for Progressive Discipline outlined below.

4.3 Actions for Progressive Discipline

- 4.3.1 Students in grades Kindergarten – Grade 8 are required to have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) throughout the full instructional day, including nutrition breaks, unless permitted by the educator as outlined above.
- 4.3.2 Students in Grades 9-12 are required to have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) during instructional time unless permitted by the educator as outlined above.
- 4.3.3 Students are responsible for their personal mobile device, how they use it and the consequences for not following the board's policy on personal mobile device use.

Step One	<i>Educator:</i> • If an educator sees a personal mobile device not stored out of view and powered off, communicate the expectations with the student • Has the discretion to determine when the next steps in this protocol are taken.
Step Two	<i>Educator:</i> • If an educator sees a personal mobile device not stored out of view and powered off, they must require it be handed in for the instructional period and placed by the student in a storage area in a location designated by the educator. • Report (verbally or electronically) to the Principal/Vice-Principal. • Communicate with parents/caregivers to discuss the incident and its impact on the student's achievement and well-being. • The electronic device will be retrieved by the student at the end of the

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Step Two (continued)	instructional time/period as indicated by the educator. • If the student does not hand in their personal mobile device when required, they must be sent to the principal's office. <i>Principal/Vice-Principal:</i> • If the student does not hand in their personal mobile device when required, they must be sent to the main office. Principals have discretion under PPM No. 145, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour, to consider a range of responses to address this behaviour, including suspension. • School Principals and Vice–Principals will conduct an investigation of the occurrence and apply the principles of progressive discipline, while considering mitigating factors, up to and including suspension. • Principal/Vice Principal communicates or meets with parents/caregivers to discuss the incident. • The personal mobile device can be retrieved by the student at the end of the instructional time/period indicated by the Principal/Vice Principal. • Enter investigation notes and the record of communication with families/caregivers/FOS SOSA into Log Notes in PowerSchool
Step Three	<i>Educator:</i> • If an educator sees a personal mobile device not stored out of view and powered off, the student should be sent to the main office to address and/or discuss the pattern of behaviour. • Report (verbally or electronically) to the Principal/Vice-Principal. <i>Principal/Vice-Principal:</i> • The student must power off the personal mobile device and it will be placed by the student in a storage area designated by the Principal/Vice-Principal for the remainder of the instructional day. • If the student does not hand in their personal mobile device when required, principals have discretion under PPM No. 145, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour, to consider a range of responses to address this behaviour including suspension. • School Principals/Vice-Principals will conduct a thorough investigation of each occurrence and apply the principles of progressive discipline, while considering mitigating factors, up to and including suspension. • PVP communicates or meets with parents/caregivers to discuss the incident. • The electronic device will be retrieved by the student at the end of the instructional day. • Enter investigation notes and the record of communication with families/caregivers/FOS SOSA into Log Notes in PowerSchool.

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- 4.3.4 As needed, for further incidents, schools will apply the principles of progressive discipline, while considering mitigating factors, up to and including suspension.

5.0 Review

The policy and its implementation should be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective and relevant to the changing technological landscape.

Revisions:

September 2025 – template migration