



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN SCHOOLS

<p>Q. Why did the Alberta government put in a Ministerial Order limiting personal communication devices in classrooms?</p>	<p>The prevalence of personal communication devices (PCD) in classrooms has been associated with increased distraction among students and instances of inappropriate usage, both of which negatively impact learning and mental health. Scientific research has found that cellphones and social media distract students from learning, have adverse effects on mental health, and increase cyberbullying incidents.</p>
<p>Q. When do the new provincial regulations on personal communication devices (PCD) and social media come into effect?</p>	<p>While the Ministerial Order comes into effect on September 1, 2024, the new provincial regulations are required to be in place in school authorities by January 1, 2025. Evergreen Catholic Schools will implement the new regulations at the start of the 2024-2025 school year for ease of transition.</p>
<p>Q. How does the new Ministerial Order benefit my child as a learner?</p>	<p>The new regulations are designed to minimize distractions, allowing students to concentrate better during classes and engage more fully in school activities. By reducing screen time, we hope to foster a more focused and interactive learning environment.</p>
<p>Q. Where do I find details on Evergreen Catholic School's requirements regarding the Ministerial Order?</p>	<p>Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division has updated two Administrative Procedures (AP 140-2 and AP 145) that clarify the guidelines for schools as they create their specific "PCD (Personal Communication Devices) Plan" to share with students, staff and parents. We have also updated our Appropriate Use Agreement for students that parents can view within PowerSchool.</p> <p>We encourage parents, guardians and students to read and review the above noted administrative procedures on our division website to ensure a clear understanding of expectations following the ministerial order.</p>
<p>Is Alberta the only province in Canada that has limited personal devices in K-12 classrooms?</p>	<p>No, most other provinces have also implemented a limitation of personal communication devices in K-12 schools.</p>

<p>Q. Is social media blocked for students?</p>	<p>Yes, social media is blocked for students if they are logged into the school's wifi or using a school educational device. Parents need to be aware that social media will not be blocked if a student is using their own personal device (i.e. cell phone) on their own LTE or 5G network.</p>
<p>What is the difference between my child using their cell phone versus their laptop in class?</p>	<p>Laptops are generally more appropriate and effective for classroom use due to their broader educational functionality and lower potential for distraction. Cell phones, while useful in certain contexts, are often seen as more distracting and less conducive to focused academic work.</p>
<p>Q. Can my child use their smartwatch and/or earbuds in class?</p>	<p>No. A smartwatch or earbuds are considered a Personal Device (PD) and not an Educational Device (ED). The use of smartwatches and earbuds in class can lead to distractions, reduced engagement, and disruptions to the learning environment. These devices make it more difficult for students to engage with their peers and the teacher.</p>
<p>Q. Why do schools have different policies?</p>	<p>While Administrative Procedure 145 outlines the parameters of appropriate use of personal communication devices, schools within Evergreen Catholic have a variety of student demographics (i.e. elementary, junior high, high school). As such, schools are able to implement specific parameters that work within their context. This allows schools to tailor their guidelines to best support their students' success and well-being.</p>
<p>Q. What are the progressive consequences for non-compliance with the school plan?</p>	<p>Individual school plans will communicate the progressive consequences for non-compliance as required by the Ministerial Order.</p>
<p>Why is it important to have progressive consequences within the school plan?</p>	<p>Progressive discipline with students is used because it offers a fair, consistent, and effective way to manage behavior while focusing on growth and improvement. By providing opportunities to correct behavior, it helps individuals learn from their mistakes and fosters a more positive, respectful environment.</p>
<p>Q. What are possible exemptions (i.e. medical) for my child if there is a special circumstance to enable the use</p>	<p>Parents are required to contact school administration and provide specialized documentation with a diagnosis of a disability or disorder by a qualified professional. Examples include but are not</p>

of a personal device?	<p>limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Psychological Assessment ● Assessment from an OT, SLP ● Medical diagnosis
Q. Where will my child's personal device be kept if confiscated?	Individual school plans will communicate where student devices will be kept if confiscated.
Q. Who is responsible for any damage to my child's personal device?	Personal Devices and Educational Devices are valuable electronic devices. Students bring a Personal Communication Device (PCD) to school at their own risk. The security and storage of these items is the sole responsibility of the owner and user. The Division assumes no responsibility for the safety, security, loss, repair, or replacement of PCDs. Owners and users of PCDs who bring and use their devices in contravention of this policy are accepting the risk their devices may be confiscated.
Q. What if I need access to my child during school hours?	Parents and guardians always have access to their child by contacting the school office.
Q. What if my child needs to contact me during school hours?	If your child needs to contact you urgently, they can speak with their teacher or go to the school office, where staff can assist in making the call.
Q. Can my child access their personal device outside of instructional time?	Individual school plans will communicate if there are any opportunities where students could access their personal devices outside of instructional time.
Q. As a parent, will I have an opportunity for feedback at my child's school throughout the school year?	Each school principal will be communicating their school PCD Plan with the entire school community and will provide opportunities for feedback and discussion through School Councils and through direct conversations.
Q. Will each school review the PCD Plan in the future?	Yes, each school will periodically review the policy to assess its impact and effectiveness. As a division, we value feedback from parents and students and will consider adjustments as needed.
Q. As a parent, how do I support the successful implementation at my child's	As partners in education, we would ask parents to review the administrative procedures and the school's PCD Plan (age appropriate) with their child as the school year begins. We

school?

encourage parents to consider having their child leave their personal devices (cell phone, smartwatches, earbuds, etc) at home.

As a parent, your support is crucial to the successful implementation of the no cell phone policy at your child's school.

Here are some practical ways you can help:

1. Communicate the Importance of the New Regulations

- **Discuss the Benefits:** Talk to your child about why the PCD plan is in place at their school. Emphasize how it will help them focus better in class, reduce distractions, and encourage more meaningful interactions with their peers.
- **Align on Expectations:** Make sure your child understands the rules and the consequences of not following them. Reinforce that the plan is in place to create a positive learning environment for everyone.

2. Model Appropriate Technology Use

- **Set an Example:** Demonstrate responsible phone usage at home, such as limiting phone use during family time or setting aside specific times to be phone-free.
- **Encourage Balance:** Discuss the importance of balancing screen time with other activities, like hobbies, sports, or reading.

3. Establish a Routine

- **Morning Preparation:** Ensure your child has a place to store their phone at home during the school day. Remind them to turn it off and put it in their locker or designated area before school starts.
- **After-School Coordination:** If your child uses their phone for after-school activities, set a routine where they retrieve it only after leaving school grounds.

4. Encourage Open Communication

- **Check-In Regularly:** Ask your child how the plan is affecting their school day. Listen to any concerns they have and offer support in adjusting to the new rules.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep in touch with the school regarding any updates or feedback about the plan. Participate in parent-teacher meetings or school council meetings, to voice your perspective and hear from other parents.

5. Reinforce the School PCD Plan at Home

- **Support School Rules:** Make it clear that you support the school's decision and expect your child to follow the rules. Avoid giving mixed messages by allowing or encouraging phone use during school hours.
- **Encourage Face-to-Face Interaction:** Promote activities at home that don't involve screens, such as board games, outdoor activities, or family conversations.

7. Provide Alternatives for Emergencies

- **Plan Ahead:** Discuss with your child what to do in case of an emergency during the school day. Make sure they know how to reach you through the school office if necessary.
- **Equip Them with Essentials:** Ensure your child has everything they need for the day so they won't feel the need to use their phone for non-emergencies (e.g., lunch, after school events, important contacts).

8. Be Patient and Supportive

- **Acknowledge Challenges:** Recognize that adjusting to the new school plan might take time. Offer encouragement and remind your child of the long-term benefits.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Celebrate Success: Praise your child for following the plan and making a positive effort to comply with the new rules. |
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By actively supporting the limitations to personal communication devices, you're helping to create a more focused, respectful, and engaged learning environment for your child and their peers.