



August 29, 2024 | Fair Notice to MHPSD Families

Re: New Personal Mobile Device, Social Media and Wi-Fi Guidelines

Dear Families,

Medicine Hat Public School Division is committed to creating positive and productive learning environments. Balancing technology with traditional learning methods has always been our priority. With the new [Alberta Education Ministerial Order](#) our goal is to implement guidelines that promote responsible and healthy mobile device usage while minimizing distractions and enhancing wellbeing.

Technology has changed the landscape of education, creating opportunities, as well as challenges for parents and educators as we try to navigate the impact of social media and personal mobile devices in the classroom. We strive to provide safe and caring school communities where students can learn the academic, social and emotional skills needed to transition to thriving adults. Cellphones and social media add unwanted challenges and can impair our ability to provide positive, inclusive and safe environments where learning, focus, safety, community and belonging are prioritized. We have worked closely with school administrators to develop their site specific Personal Mobile Device, Social Media and Wi-Fi Guidelines. **School guidelines will be sent to families before the first day of classes and come into effect on Sept 1, 2024; it is important for parents to review this document.**

Cellphones, smartphones and headphones/ear buds will not be permitted during instruction; they will be kept on silent and out of sight (stored in school approved locations, such as a backpack, locker or other). Teachers will indicate if there are specific learning situations that support cellphone, smartphone, smartwatch and headphone use.

MHPSD will continue to support the use of technology in the classroom for learning. Students from grades 3-12 should continue to bring a learning device, such as a laptop, Chromebook or tablet, which are allowable for educational purposes only. We strongly suggest that students leave their cellphones and smartphones at home when possible; school staff will not be responsible for loss, theft or damage.

Additionally, MHPSD will only allow registered learning devices (such as tablets, laptops and Chromebooks) on the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Wi-Fi network. Cellphones, smartphones and smartwatches will not be allowed to access the BYOD Wi-Fi network, except for medical or specialized learning needs. Social media sites will be blocked on the BYOD Wi-Fi network and on school learning devices. If a student chooses to engage on social media during the school day, they will have to do so using data. **Families are advised to review these changes with their children to avoid data charges on their cell phones.**

We understand that these changes may present some concerns and believe in implementing these guidelines with care and compassion. We will work with students to develop healthy and responsible habits and ensure that technology enhances, rather than hinders, their educational experience. Schools will implement site specific measures to address when the guidelines are not followed. We want to answer your questions, learn more [Frequently Asked Questions](#). As parents and guardians, you are vital members of our community, and we look forward to working together to create the healthy academic and social environment that everyone deserves.

We appreciate your support!

**Tracy Hensel, Acting Superintendent
Medicine Hat Public School Division**