



ICSS Digital Device/Social Media Procedures

Dear ICSS Parents,

As you may be aware, **Alberta Education has instituted a ministerial order, effective September 1, 2024** that restricts the use and presence of personal digital devices during instructional time and social media (certain applications) use during school hours. The premise of this new legislation is in response to growing evidence that the use of devices cause disruptions during instruction time, negatively impacting the learning environment for all students. We live in a current modern context where the use of technology seems inescapable at times. Along with the accelerated use of technology, namely smartphones and other personal devices, have come some unintended challenges that we face as a school in relation to creating ordered learning environments and building positive community.

Lethbridge School Division has published procedures and guidelines that align with the ministerial order. As each school context is unique and to support student learning at Immanuel Christian Secondary School, we have developed personal device procedures for our **Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)** and **High School Students (Grades 9-12)**. As you will read below, in some ways, our procedures exceed the Lethbridge School Division guidelines and there are differences between Middle School and High School Procedures. You will notice that our procedures in Middle School are the same as instituted for the 2023-2024 school year.

Personal Digital Device Definition

- Any handheld device that has internet access, texting, music, or gaming capabilities.
- Smartphones, Smart watches, personal laptops are considered personal digital devices.
- Ear buds and headphones are included as accessories to personal digital devices

Personal Device Procedures

Middle School

Students are not to be in possession of or using personal digital devices for communication or entertainment purposes anywhere on school grounds during the school day. This includes instructional time and non-instructional time (breaks/lunches). Use of social media platforms on Division networks is restricted to educational use only.

High School

Students are not permitted to have personal digital devices “on their person” (pockets, etc.) during instructional time (bell to bell). Personal digital devices are to be stored (silent or powered off) in a backpack, locker or stored in their vehicle. Use of personal digital devices are permitted during non-instructional time (morning/afternoon break, lunch break) subject to responsible use. Use of social media platforms on Division networks is restricted to educational use only.

Supporting Principles

- We value “people over phones”. Screen-free connection with classmates and school staff will be encouraged during breaks (ie. High school students) and use of social media will be monitored.
- **Middle School - Should your child bring a device to school**, all devices must be locked in lockers during the school day
- Personal digital devices are NOT permitted to be utilized as calculators on assessments.
- Only students with medical conditions requiring access to device (i.e. diabetes) and/or have a documented ISP accommodation will be permitted to use personal digital devices in class (music, text to speech, word processing, etc) in collaboration with and under the supervision of the classroom teacher or educational assistant.

Disciplinary Measures

Students who do not follow these personal device guidelines and repeatedly use their device in an inappropriate manner or at inappropriate times will be addressed in accordance to the following disciplinary steps:

1. **First Offence:** Students *may* be given an initial warning at the discretion of a teacher or the personal device will be confiscated and kept at the front office until the end of the school day. Student may retrieve device at the end of the day. Teacher will contact parents at the end of the school day to discuss strategies and solutions in helping your child to follow the policy.
2. **Second Offence:** Personal device will be kept at the front office until the end of the school day. Parent must retrieve device from front office. Contact with parents/guardians by administration on strategies and solutions in helping your child to follow the procedures.
3. **Third and Subsequent Offences:** Repeated offences will be treated as a refusal to comply with the rules of the school and dealt with accordingly using disciplinary measures (detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension)

How can you support us?

1. Have a conversation with your child about the expectations of these procedures and frame it as a positive way to impact their learning, the learning of others and relationships with classmates.
2. If you know that appropriate personal device use is a struggle for your child, **please have your child keep their device at home.**
3. **What if there is an emergency and I need to contact my child?**
We take your child’s safety at school very seriously. In contacting our front office, we will have your child return a phone call to you as soon as possible.
4. For middle school students (and high school students), as alternative to personal device use during break and lunch times, encourage your child in positive activities such as: games, reading, structured or unstructured play (indoors and/or outdoors)

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation towards the implementation of these personal digital device procedures at Immanuel Christian Secondary School.

Sincerely,

Mr. Matthew Bekkering - Principal