



Canadian Rockies Public Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: CRPS Introduces New Guidelines on Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media

In alignment with Alberta Education’s Ministerial Order, *Standards for the Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools*, Canadian Rockies Public Schools (CRPS) will implement revised guidelines on the use of personal mobile devices starting Aug. 26, 2024. These guidelines are designed to foster a safer and more focused learning environment for all students.

Under the guidelines, all CRPS students will be prohibited from using personal mobile devices (including smart watches) during instructional time. Students are required to silence or power off their devices and store them out of view. This policy applies to all students, with exceptions made for those who need devices for health and medical purposes, to support specialized learning needs, or as approved by teachers for specific educational activities. Additionally, student access to social media platforms will be disabled on CRPS networks during school hours.

During the school day, these restrictions will vary slightly by grade level:

- Kindergarten to Grade 8 - Students are not permitted to use personal mobile devices during school hours.
- Grades 9 to 12 - Students may use their personal mobile devices before school, at lunch, and after school, but not during instructional time, including spares.

"Across the division, most schools were already practicing these rules," said Superintendent of Schools Chris MacPhee. "Therefore, we decided to move forward with their implementation now, rather than wait until January as mandated by the Ministerial Order."

According to MacPhee, CRPS’ administrative procedures related to the use of technology, personal devices, and social media have been updated to reflect these revised guidelines. This will allow CRPS schools to follow suit and put in place local rules that align with our procedures.

CRPS schools have adopted a progressive discipline approach to ensure compliance with these new rules. The division will also continue to educate students about the responsible and safe use of personal mobile devices, emphasizing the importance of minimizing distractions and maintaining a healthy mental well-being.

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The implementation of these guidelines is backed by extensive research showing the detrimental effects of mobile devices and social media on student learning and mental health. The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health has highlighted the risks associated with social media use, including increased body dissatisfaction, disordered eating behaviours, and low self-esteem, particularly among adolescent girls. Studies also show a strong correlation between excessive social media use and sleep disturbances, depression, and other mental health challenges among youth.

Research further indicates that even the mere presence of mobile devices in classrooms can reduce cognitive capacity and impair students' ability to concentrate, particularly in those most dependent on their devices.

"Our division is committed to creating a learning environment that prioritizes student well-being, safety, and academic success," said MacPhee. "These guidelines will advance our aims."

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