

POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT	N.E.P.N. CODE
USE OF CELL PHONES IN SCHOOLS	GBEF/JICJ

I. POLICY

The Louis Riel School Division (Division) recognizes that the use of cell phones is prevalent in today's society and that school staff are uniquely positioned to:

- model appropriate cell phone use;
- educate students with respect to responsible and ethical cell phone use; and
- help students develop safe and healthy behaviours when using and creating information online, consistent with the Division's [Multi-Year Strategic Action 3.3](#).

As per [ministerial directive](#) dated August 15, 2024 and with the shared intent of reducing the number of distractions in classrooms and minimizing the impact of harmful effects of social media and online platforms, the Division calls on school communities to develop common cell phone use practices for students and staff, as outlined in the **GUIDELINES** and **PROCEDURES** below.

II. GUIDELINES

- Consistent with the intent outlined above, it is expected that devices that have similar functions to cell phones (such as tablets and smart watches) will be treated similarly to cell phones.
- School-based policies related to cell phone use that were in effect on June 30, 2024 will continue to be in effect at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.
- Each School Principal (or designate) will lead conversations with staff, students, and parents/guardians to develop common cell phone use practices for their school. These conversations will provide the opportunity to:
 - become acquainted with relevant current research regarding the impact of cell phones and social media on learning and wellbeing;
 - appreciate the importance of demonstrating healthy behaviours when using cell phones and social media;
 - contribute to the development of common cell phone use practices; and
 - understand the rationale for the adoption of common cell phone use practices.
- School staff will leverage opportunities for education related to impact of cell phones and social media on engagement in the learning environment and personal wellbeing in both proactive and responsive ways.

Adopted:	October 22, 2024	Legal References: The Public Schools Act (Manitoba), Sections 41(1)(b.1), 41(1)(b.2), 41(1)(y)
Revised:		

III. PROCEDURES

- A. School Principals will ensure that the common cell phone practices developed under **GUIDELINE C**:
1. comply with the [ministerial directive](#) dated August 15, 2024;
 2. align with the principles outlined in [Policy JK – Supporting Student Behaviour](#);
 3. provide direction regarding student use of cell phones, including:
 - a. when cell phone use is authorized and what conditions apply;
 - b. where and how students will store cell phones when use is not authorized;
 - c. how staff will address situations of unauthorized cell phone use during the school day;
 4. provide direction regarding staff use of cell phones during class time and scheduled supervision;
 5. contain a provision:
 - a. stating that school office staff will facilitate communication between students and their parents/guardians during the school day when an emergency arises;
 - b. requiring students and staff to follow all terms of [Policy IJNDC – Internet and Information Systems Use: Staff and Students](#) and to seek consent prior to photographing or recording the voice or image of others;
 - c. prohibiting the use of cell phones by students during a lockdown;
 - d. prohibiting the use of cell phones in changerooms or washrooms at any time.
 6. are communicated to staff, students, parents/guardians, and the Superintendent of Schools (or designate) prior to the date of implementation, November 1, 2024;
 7. are revised annually in consultation with staff, students, and parents/guardians and communicated to all parties, including the Superintendent of Schools (or designate) prior to November 1.
- B. Where the School Principal authorizes student use of cell phones to respond to medical or learning needs specific to individual students, details shall be documented in the student’s Individual Health Care Plan or Student Specific Plan and communicated to concerned staff.
- C. Where Grade 7 and 8 students are required to attend practical arts or other programming off-site and are responsible for their own transportation, the School Principal shall authorize students to carry their cell phone for the purposes of emergency use during the time that they are in transition from one school to the other.
- D. Teachers will reference the [Literacy with ICT Continuum, Health and Safety Guidelines, and Ethics and Responsibilities Guidelines](#) (Manitoba Education, 2017) and other sources (see below) when planning lessons related to responsible cell phone use and digital citizenship.

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Revised:		

- E. Students choosing to bring a cell phone to school are responsible for following the common cell phone practices.
- F. Parents/guardians are expected to support and reinforce this **POLICY** by ensuring that their child understands and complies with all relevant **GUIDELINES** and **PROCEDURES** (as per The Public Schools Act, section 58.7(a)).
- G. Parents/guardians who wish to appeal a decision related to this policy shall follow the steps outlined in the [LRSD Protocol for Resolution of Concerns](#).
- H. The Division will assume no responsibility in any circumstances for the loss, destruction, damage, or theft of any cell phone, nor for any communication costs associated with the use of such devices, whether authorized or not. Students and families are responsible for locating such lost or stolen items.

Resources:

- Haidt, Jonathan. *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* Penguin Press, 2024.
- Doug Lemov et al.. *Reconnect: Building School Culture for Meaning, Purpose, and Belonging* Jossey-Bass, 2023.

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Revised:		