



Gilbert Paterson Middle School



At Paterson, we promote humanity through empathy, connection, and resiliency.

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Personal Mobile Device and Social Media Use in Schools – 2024-25

Personal mobile devices are an integral part of our daily lives. However, they can also be a distraction to learning and facilitate other issues around responsible social media use and negative peer interactions. Research has also shown a variety of negative effects of increased screen time and social media exposure on middle school aged children. The government of Alberta has recently released Ministerial Order #014/2024 regarding personal devices use and we wanted to share Paterson's plan for responsible use.

Our school's procedure will follow the new Lethbridge School regulations that can be seen on their website under 607.4.

Personal Mobile Device: Any personal electronic device capable of communicating or accessing the internet, including but not limited to cellphones, tablets, laptops, and smartwatches.

The school is a partner with parents and guardians when it comes to personal devices. Students are expected to keep their devices in their lockers during instructional time at school. If they must carry it in their backpacks or pockets, devices must be turned off.

- Devices may be used at lunch and after school. If used during lunch, they must return to the student's locker when classes resume.
- There should be absolutely no cellphone use in bathrooms or change rooms at any time.
- The Division will determine what platforms students can access through our wifi and desktop computers.
- Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIP). Students are not allowed to take pictures, audio or video of any other person, including staff or students, without permission. This is against the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIP). For further clarification about technology, please refer to Lethbridge School's ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY.

We understand that some students require their devices for health monitoring or exceptional learning needs. These circumstances will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and exceptions will be made for these circumstances.

If students are misusing their devices, a call or email will come first from their teachers. If the problem continues, administration will become involved and may result in the student not being able to bring their phone to school or leaving it in the office. Please know that the consequence will be proportional to the conduct of the student.

Staff are also committed to modeling this practice for students. Personal devices are still needed by staff to take classroom attendance remotely, call or text information to the office and other areas of communication within the school. There may also be a specific class activity where students need to use a phone for an application such as pictures or video for an assignment. In these cases, the classroom teachers will facilitate the opportunity to obtain and return devices from lockers. We also realize that parents may need to be in contact with students during the day and that can be done through the school office. We believe that the positives of a device free classroom outweigh any inconveniences.

We are also committed to continue to teach digital citizenship through guest speakers, classroom presentations from our Tech teachers, Wellness team and health class lessons. These learning opportunities of proper technology use, combined with reduced screen time, are important in creating a positive and healthy balance for our students.

We thank you for your support and we welcome any questions or inquiries.