

# Staff Report



June 17, 2025

**To** Board of Education (Public Meeting)  
**From** Sean Nosek, Superintendent/CEO  
**Re** **Update on Personal Digital Device Restrictions**

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This report is presented to the Board for information.

## **BACKGROUND:**

As of April 12, 2024, the Province of British Columbia mandated that all Boards of Education update their school codes of conduct to include restrictions on the use of personal digital devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets) in schools. This policy was designed to:

- Minimize classroom distractions and support focused learning.
- Enhance student online safety.
- Ensure consistency across school districts.

This policy requires that restrictions be:

- Age-appropriate and developmentally suitable.
- Inclusive of instructional use and digital literacy.
- Responsive to accessibility, medical, and equity needs.

Full compliance was required by July 1, 2024.

The 2024/25 strategies being used in schools to support the Provincial Personal Device Policy are as follows:

School	Strategies
Abbotsford School of Integrated Arts	<p>Our feedback is that the secondary teachers appreciate the autonomy of being able to have students use devices in their classroom IF they allow it but also appreciate the ability to say, no to having devices out or available.</p> <p>We are happy with everything right now and no big issues that are plaguing our school around this.</p>
Abbotsford Senior Secondary School	<p>We have been following the policy of AP 345. While we trust our staff to enforce this policy, we have left the implementation of the policy up to individual classroom teachers, under the guidelines below, which all staff follow. We also purchased cell phone pocket hangers for staff to use. We have about 25 staff using them in the classrooms. Students enter the class, place the cell phone on silent and in their designated pocket and they pick them up at the end of class or with teacher's permission.</p> <p><u>Guidelines staff and students follow</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no devices during instructional, tutorial, or assessment time.</li> <li>• devices should be put on silent upon entering the classroom</li> <li>• teachers reserve the right to enforce classroom policies on an individual basis</li> <li>• teachers reserve the right to take devices from students and return them at the end of class or to give them to administration</li> <li>• no devices in areas of privacy including bathrooms, change rooms, or counselling spaces.</li> </ul> <p>I think that usage is down during instructional time, and students are using them less in between classes as well.</p>
Abbotsford Traditional School	<p>The Personal Digital Device policy has been quite successful at ATS. We have communicated our policy and flow of interventions to our parent and student community. Issues around phones are reduced. Our parent community is supportive of reducing their students' time on devices.</p>
Abbotsford Virtual School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 11/12 students are not on site (online), Grade 6-10 students are blended meaning on site at AVS two days a week and at home online three days</li> <li>• Personal Digital device policy is going smoothly at AVS, guidelines have not been an issue and have only needed occasional reminders from staff to students</li> <li>• Students onsite have access to district technology as needed (laptops, iPads) or bring personal laptops</li> <li>• When students need access to phones for educational use during class time, it is at the teacher's discretion</li> </ul>
Bakerview Centre for Learning	<p>We are making efforts to implement the policy and guidelines around personal digital devices. In general, cell phone use continues to be a distraction, and we continue to address issues with students and families. We also continue to see parents regularly contacting students during instructional time, making it challenging for students to focus and comply with school-based interventions targeting the use of personal digital devices.</p> <p>We would like to see a continued focus on specific guidelines from the district and provincial levels regarding interventions to address/support students who seem to be struggling with cell phone "addiction".</p>

Rick Hansen Secondary School	<p>We have implemented the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students were informed that mobile devices were not permitted during instructional time unless with express permission from the teacher (use of device for educational reasons)</li> <li>• students were informed that instructional time included the 5 minutes between the two morning blocks and the two afternoon blocks, washroom breaks (or other travel times during class) but did not include lunch time</li> <li>• each teacher/classroom was provided with a "cellphone hotel" (wall pocket chart for phone storage) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ teachers were given the autonomy to determine how/if they would use this during their classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ some have demonstrated consistent use, many not at all</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• students were made aware that refusal to follow the directive to put their devices away would mean admin follow up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ conversations/warnings</li> <li>○ confiscation</li> <li>○ parent notification</li> <li>○ <b>suspension</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• students who have demonstrated a pattern of device misuse turn their phones into the front office for safe keeping for the day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ currently, approximately 20 students do so each day</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Overall, we noticed that at the start of the year, very few devices were seen, and students were generally compliant. As the years wanes, we have seen a significant uptake in the use of the devices around the school throughout the day and few classroom rules/structures around this. Saying that, there is certainly much less device use compared to last year.</p> <p>Moving into next year, we will ask that all teachers make use of the cellphone hotels to ensure we have consistency class to class. It is our hope that this will eliminate (or greatly reduce) the number of students using devices during bathrooms breaks or in class. We will continue to share this messaging to our community.</p>
Robert Bateman Secondary School	<p>Staff love the policy, and we have excellent buy-in. We rarely need to confiscate phones. Phones are rarely out in classes, and most teachers have a "phone hotel" or other clear procedure for storing phones away. Our struggle is with earbuds: kids who think they need music to focus on are very sneaky about having those in almost all day.</p>
W.J. Mouat Secondary School	<p>The policy is largely successful and continues to support a focused learning environment. Students are expected to either place their phones in designated classroom wall pouches or keep them stored away in their bags. Phones are not to be taken out of classrooms during instructional time, including when students leave to use the washroom.</p> <p>The primary area of concern lies in inconsistent staff enforcement. While many teachers consistently and effectively uphold the policy, others are less consistent.</p>
Yale Secondary School	<p>The digital device policy has brought small changes to Yale. Almost all of our teachers had a policy in place limiting the use of student devices. What the policy has done is emboldened some teachers to enforce their policy more consistently and refer chronic issues to administration. Many teachers use a "cell phone hotel" as an extra measure to ensure personal devices are not a distraction for students.</p>