

# RSS Personal Digital Device Guidelines

We want our students to be healthy, happy, and engaged in their learning. We encourage them to grow and reach their full potential. Guided by Dënezhu ways of knowing and being, our school guidelines are working towards aligning with the concept of Tr'èhude – living in a good way.

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To support learning at Robert Service School, in collaboration with staff, students and school council, we have developed guidelines for the use of personal digital devices.

## Personal Digital Device Definition

- Any device that has internet access, texting, music, or gaming capabilities including, but not limited to a smartphone, a smart watch, a tablet, earbuds, handheld gaming device or a virtual reality device.

## Personal Digital Device Guidelines

### Kindergarten - Grade 7 Students

Robert Service School expects that devices remain at home. If this poses a challenge for your family, please follow these guidelines:

- Personal digital devices are not on your person and need to be given to teacher or kept in a backpack for safekeeping;
- Personal digital devices cannot be used during school hours, which includes:
  - after getting off the bus in the morning,
  - before getting on the bus at the end of the school day,
  - morning and lunch recesses
  - lunch time or class time.

### Grade 8 - 12 Students

Robert Service School expects that devices remain at home or in a locker. If this poses a challenge for your family, please follow these guidelines:

- Personal digital devices cannot be used during the following times:
  - between 8:40 am - 12:15 pm (*Wednesday 8:40 am - 11:10 am*)
  - between 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm (*Wednesday 12:05 pm - 2:30 pm*)
- During these times, personal digital devices are to be kept at home or in lockers, not on your person or in a backpack or binder;
- Personal Digital Devices can be used during lunch break 12:15 pm - 1:00 pm (*Wednesday 11:10am - 12:05pm*)

## Misuse of Personal Digital Device

The primary goal of these guidelines is to reduce distraction and increase student engagement in their learning. If a student is found with an electronic device without explicit permission, they will be expected to give the device to a staff member.

- *First misuse:* the supervising adult will collect the device (or a student will accompany their device) and it will be taken to the office until the end of the day.

- *Subsequent misuses:* the supervising adult will collect the device (or a student will accompany their device) and it will be taken to the office and must be collected by a parent or guardian at the end of the day.

Teachers will reach out to families to work together to help students understand the guidelines. Teachers will connect with Administration for support if a student continues to struggle to follow the guidelines. All staff are encouraged to guide students in observing these guidelines.

We believe that both staff and parents/guardians play a crucial role in setting an example for the responsible use of personal digital devices during school events. To support this, we encourage everyone—staff, parents, guardians, and visitors—to minimize the use of personal electronic devices while on school grounds. This helps us create more focused and engaging environments for all participants.

## **Use of Personal Digital Devices for Medical/Learning Purposes**

The school acknowledges the vital role personal devices play for students with medical needs. To aid in the management of chronic conditions and facilitate communication with healthcare providers, students who require medical assistance will be permitted to use their personal devices as needed with prior approval from administration and as stated in their IEP or SLP. For students requiring the use of devices for learning purposes, those needs will be outlined in their IEP or SLP and shared with classroom teachers by our Learning Assistance Teachers. Our goal is to maintain a balance between safety and accessibility, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support.

## **Staff Use of Personal Digital Device**

Staff working with RSS students are to limit their own personal digital device use to prep time and lunch breaks, modeling practices consistent with these guidelines. Staff understands the merit of personal digital devices as teaching tools and may use them from time to time to document student learning or to support instructional or learning activities, especially in areas of digital citizenship and online safety.

### **FAQs**

#### **How can I reach my child if I need to contact them?**

In the event of an emergency, you can contact your child through the office at 867-993-5435. The office will connect you with them. Students may use classroom phones or the office telephone if necessary. High school students can use their lunch break to send and respond to messages.

#### **Why are you implementing these guidelines?**

Our change in guidelines is a response to changing guidelines across Canada in many provinces and territories. Research indicates that personal digital devices can be a significant distraction, hindering a child's ability to learn and work effectively (Barile, 2021). Our hope is that by teaching healthy management strategies, we can improve academic focus and the overall social and emotional development of our learners.

### **Useful Links**

Canadian Centre for Child Protection <https://protectkidsonline.ca/app/en/>

Away for the Day <https://www.awayfortheday.org/about>

Safer Schools Together <https://resources.saferchoolstogether.com/link/352883/37/>

