

**Authority:** Footprints for Learning Society

**School:** FOOTPRINTS FOR LEARNING CHARTER ACADEMY

Last Updated: March 17, 2025

**HOLISTIC AUTHENTIC PURPOSE DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURIAL GLOBAL**

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## **DIGITAL USE POLICY- CAMERAS/CELLPHONES/INTERNET**

### **PURPOSE:**

To ensure guidelines for students bringing electronic devices to school are established and understood. Electronic communication devices, including but not limited to cell phones and cameras, are brought onto school property by students on a daily basis. Such devices can empower student learning and capabilities, but may also be disruptive to the learning or safety of fellow students.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to all students and staff.

### **MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT (2024):**

On June 17, 2024, the Honourable Demetrios Nicolaidis, Minister of Education, announced restrictions on the use of personal mobile devices and access to social media platforms in Alberta Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools, starting September 1, 2024. These restrictions are aimed at helping to reduce distractions and maximize learning time while supporting student mental health and reducing opportunities for cyberbullying. A personal device is considered to be any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet, such as cell phone, tablet, laptop, or smartwatch.

### **IMPORTANT GUIDELINES FOR FLCA:**

#### **A. Exceptions to Generalized Rules as defined by FLCA Leadership**

- Limited use of personal mobile devices must be permitted for health or medical reasons or to support special learning needs.
- Limited use of personal mobile devices may be permitted for educational or other purposes.
- Limited access to social media platforms within the FLCA Google Domain and targeted education YouTube sites may be permitted. Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Tiktok, Instagram are not allowed and other applications of similar nature. Games with social media elements will be blocked.

## **B. Grades Kindergarten through 4**

- Requested to NOT bring cellphones to school. Turned off or on silent in lockers while in school.
- Use permitted on the bus.
- Exceptions can be made for specific students with unique learning needs with principal (or designate) approval.

## **C. Grades 5 through 12**

- Turned off or on silent and in lockers while in classes UNLESS specifically directed by a teacher for a specific learning activity.
- Use permitted on the bus.
- Exceptions can be made for specific students with unique learning needs with principal (or designate) approval.
- Used **appropriately\*** during the lunch period for indoor time under adult supervision and must be returned to students' lockers at the end of the lunch period.
- To remain in students' lockers during the snack breaks, but can be used for the waiting time for buses after school under adult supervision.
- Not allowed during Field Trips without permission.
- Not to be brought into the washrooms.
- Use of cellular cameras and audio recorders may only be done for specific educational benefits and only with prior permission of the teacher or principal.

***APPROPRIATE USE IS WITHOUT SOCIAL MEDIA\* ACCESS AND WITHOUT ACCESS TO OFFENSIVE SITES AS DEEMED BY THE BOARD, PRINCIPAL, AND/OR TEACHER IN REGARD TO CONTENT AND USE.***

*\*Social Media Sites include Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. - are defined as online platforms and tools that allow people to create, share, and exchange information with others outside of learning designs. Social Media platforms to share the FLCA domain of Google apps is allowed but monitored (e.g. Google Classrooms, Google documents, Google Education Sites).*

### **PROCEDURES ON USE:**

1. Students may in strategic learning be expected and encouraged to use digital devices to enhance learning programs. These instances may include:

- Access to online learning platforms established by FLCA (e.g. Google Classrooms and Moodle);
- Access to instructional YouTubes as permitted and with supervision;
- Access to applications as permitted and with supervision;
- Access to games as permitted and with supervision;
- Access to AI as permitted and with supervision; and
- Access to cameras and audio applications as permitted and with supervision.

2. Electronic communication devices may be confiscated for limited durations by teachers or school principal if a device interferes with classroom expectations or violates classroom or school rules. Alternatively, or additionally, students may be interviewed on misuse of devices. These instances may include:

- Misuse of physical handling of device;
- Misuse in using another person's device without permission;
- Misuse in sharing of data or accessing data;
- Misuse in using social media platforms; and
- Misuse in plagiarism or cheating on responses for assessments.

3. The principal shall establish an expected consequence for a first incident, second incident, and subsequent incidents. Keeping in mind the safety of staff and students and the desire to de-escalate incidents, the principal or designate may be asked to intervene if a student refuses to hand over a device:

3.1. Information of a confiscated device will be recorded to ensure it is returned (i.e. name of student). The principal (or designate) shall keep the device and information in a secure location. The principal (or designate) will determine when and under what circumstances the device is to be returned in accordance with school practice.

3.2. The principal must communicate clearly the school practices with regard to student cell phone or electronic devices and the consequences for first incident, second incident and subsequent incidents.

4. Inappropriate use of electronic communication devices could result in suspension or expulsion for the following:

4.1. The use of the electronic communication device results in a threat to the physical safety of staff, students and community.

4.2. Text or electronic messaging is threatening, demeaning or abusive.

- 4.3. Electronic communication used to harass or embarrass a student or staff member or to facilitate cheating.
- 4.4. The unauthorized use of recording of video or audio footage without permission of the principal, the teacher, and all individuals recorded.
- 4.5. Electronic communication use during Diploma Exams or Provincial Achievement Tests.

Students who choose to bring cellphones to school do so at their own risk. The school assumes **No Liability** for lost, stolen or damaged cell phones.

Student use of cell phones at Footprints for Learning Charter Academy is a privilege. Failure to adhere to established guidelines will result in the following corrective measures:

- **1st** Offense: Phone taken away until end of day and held in the office.
- **2nd** Offense: Phone taken away until end of day and held in the office. Guardians will be notified and then the student may pick up the phone from the office.
- **3rd** Offense: Student will not be allowed to bring a cell phone onto school property for a determined amount of time.

### **Consequences**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in keeping with their responsibilities as students.

The school will investigate each instance of unacceptable conduct and pursue disciplinary action in a manner consistent with the principles of fundamental justice and the school's student discipline policy (below). In grave circumstances, an individual found to have engaged in unacceptable conduct may be subject to possible suspension or expulsion.

### **Remediation and Support**

In order to foster a positive learning environment, *Footprints for Learning Charter Academy* will engage in reasonable and caring efforts to support both the individual(s) who may have been the subject or victim(s) of unacceptable behavior(s) and to support perpetrators of unacceptable conduct to improve their conduct.

Supportive actions the *Footprints for Learning Charter Academy* may include, but are not limited to:

- Mentoring of individual students by older students;

- More focused attention to individual students;
- Regular follow-up meetings of specific teachers with individual students;
- Student Peer Support Groups, including GSA's as appropriate;
- Counseling; and
- Restorative justice processes.

#### 5. Annual Communication Process

The FLCA Alberta Education Authority is required to communicate this Policy to the staff, students, and parents annually with the overview of FLCA Policies in the orientation and handbooks for staff and students, and to the parents in the annual 'fall start-up' newsletter for FLCA families. Further, the policy will be posted for ongoing reference on the FLCA website. Lastly, the teaching of digital awareness will be an annual focus to embrace the digital wellness of all students.