

EIPS Launches New Cellphone Policy

Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Board of Trustees has approved a new policy regarding cellphones. *Policy 24, Personal Communication Devices* outlines how students and staff use cellphones and personal devices within EIPS schools. The goal: To ensure all students use technology responsibly and develop skills in digital citizenship.

To develop the policy, the Board undertook a comprehensive review of the Division's existing procedures and practices used to oversee the use of student-owned technology in the classroom. It also conducted extensive public consultations with students, teachers, school administrators and EIPS families. Overall, the feedback was invaluable and provided a clear picture of how to best manage the use of these devices.

Policy highlights:

Students in kindergarten to Grade 6: No access to cellphones or personal devices during the school day, including during breaks and the lunch hour—the only exception, students with a diagnosed medical condition or an identified inclusive-educational need.

Students in grades 7 to 9: No access to cellphones or personal devices during class time—the only exceptions, students with a diagnosed medical condition or an identified inclusive-educational need, and when given permission by a teacher for a specific educational task or purpose. Students can access their device during identified break periods, including between classes and the lunch hour.

Students in grades 10 to 12: No access to cellphones or personal devices during class time—the only exceptions, students with a diagnosed medical condition or an identified inclusive-educational need, and when given permission by a teacher for a specific educational task or purpose. Students can access their device during spare periods and identified breaks, including between classes and the lunch hour.

The purpose of the policy is to ensure learning takes place in an environment with fewer distractions. When students can focus on what's taking place in the classroom and can interact directly with the teacher and other students, they're in a better position to grow and succeed.