



## Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Academy Personal Mobile Devices and Social Media in Schools Policy

**Effective Date: 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2025**

**Policy Number: PM-01**

**Review Cycle: Every 3 years or as required by Alberta Education**

Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Academy (OIAA) is committed to fostering a focused learning environment, promoting healthy social interactions, and ensuring a safe and respectful learning environment during instructional time by establishing clear guidelines for the responsible use of cell phones and personal mobile devices.

### **Purpose**

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of cell phones and social media within Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Academy, to support a positive and focused learning atmosphere, while ensuring student safety and digital responsibility. It aligns with Ministerial Order 014/2024 and the school's code of conduct. The policy aims to enhance student focus, promote healthy social interactions, and ensure a safe and respectful learning environment.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all students, staff, and visitors within the school premises, including classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, and extracurricular activities.

### **Definitions**

- **Personal Mobile Device (PMD):** Any privately-owned electronic device capable of digital communication, including cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, or similar devices.
- **Social Media Platform:** Online services and apps that enable users to create, share, or interact with content and with each other online. These platforms allow individuals and organizations to communicate through text, images, videos, and other forms of multimedia in real time or asynchronously. (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, X, YouTube, LinkedIn, Discord).
- **Instructional Time:** Time during which students are engaged in curricular instruction or supervised learning under a teacher or staff member.

### **Policy Statement:**

- Children are not permitted to use personal mobile devices during instructional time, at school events during the school day (e.g., assembly, homerooms, clubs) unless specially authorized by the principal or their teacher.

- Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent mode during instructional time unless explicitly permitted by a teacher for educational purposes.
- Devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks or designated storage areas upon arrival.
- Social media access will be always disabled on school networks and devices.
- Use of personal devices to bully, harass, or intimidate others (including via social media) is strictly prohibited.
- Use of personal devices to capture or post photos, videos, or audio of individuals at school without prior authorization is prohibited, in accordance with privacy legislation.
- If a child needs to contact a parent/guardian, this must be arranged through the school.
- If a parent needs to contact a student, this must be arranged through the school.
- Exceptions for medical or learning support needs must be pre-approved by administration with documentation.

### **Teacher and Staff Discretion**

- The principal or teachers may permit the use of personal mobile digital devices for specific educational activities on a case-by-case basis. These activities should be planned and structured to enhance learning outcomes.
- In the event of an emergency, the principal or designate will communicate acceptable use of personal mobile devices.
- Students with health or medical reasons or special learning needs may be granted permission to use personal mobile devices during instructional time, as indicated in the student's Individualized Program Plan.
- Unauthorized use of cell phones may result in confiscation, with retrieval processes determined by the principal.

### **Social Media Use**

#### **Responsible Digital Citizenship**

- Students and staff must use social media responsibly and in accordance with school values and the schools code of conduct.
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or inappropriate content sharing through social media will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.
- Posting or sharing images, videos, or information about other students, staff, or school activities without permission is strictly prohibited.

#### **School-Sanctioned Use**

- Any official school-related social media accounts must be managed by authorized personnel.
- Students may engage in school-approved social media activities under teacher supervision for educational purposes.
- School-related content must align with Alberta Education's Digital Citizenship Guidelines.

- Student access to social media platforms on personal mobile devices or school provided devices during instructional/class time is not permitted to ensure students remain focused on educational tasks
- If an educational outcome requires access to social media sites, the teacher must consult with the principal before considering access to such a site.
- For the purpose of this administrative procedure, platforms and applications that enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking are prohibited. This includes, but not limited to, social media sites including: Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter/X, reddit, LinkedIn, Telegram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, Twitch, BeReal, ClubHouse, Flickr, Tumblr, Yelp, Foursquare, WeChat, MeWe, Kuaishou, Weibo, QQ, LINE, Discord, Threads, Mastodon, Blue Social, Quora, Tencent, Yahoo Groups, Yammer, Bluesky and others as determined by the school as part of routine social media monitoring.

### **Processes and Procedures**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Children are expected to comply with this policy and use technology responsibly in line with the expectations outlined in section 31 of the Education Act.
- Parents/Guardians are asked to support the policy in line with the expectations outlined in section 32 of the Education Act.
- Teachers will implement this policy in their classrooms and determine appropriate instructional use of technology.
- Administrators will support staff in enforcing the policy, responding to infractions, and reviewing any exception requests.
- Teachers and administrators will protect children's data when devices are confiscated for policy violations by storing them in a secure location and refraining from searching or accessing its content unless there is a compelling safety or legal reason to do so.

### **Liability for Mobile Devices**

- Students are encouraged to leave personal mobile devices at home. Students who choose to bring personal mobile devices to school do so at their own risk.
- The school assumes no liability for lost, stolen or damaged personal mobile devices.
- Parents/guardians and students assume full responsibility if their device is lost, stolen or damaged.
- Any devices that are brought to school are to be stored in designated places as defined by the school and out of view.
- All personal mobile devices are to be powered off or placed on silent mode.

### **Consequences of Policy Violations**

- **First Offense:** Verbal warning and reminder of policy.
- **Second Offense:** Temporary confiscation of the device; parent/guardian notification.
- **Third Offense:** Device held by the principal's office until a parent/guardian retrieves it. Possible additional disciplinary actions may be applied.

- **Severe Violations:** Incidents involving cyberbullying, harassment, or security threats will be dealt with as per school disciplinary policies and may involve law enforcement, if necessary.

### Communication and Education

This policy and accompanying procedures will be:

- Communicated to children and families at the beginning of each school year.
- Included in child/parent handbooks and school websites or available by request addressed to the school office.
- Reinforced annually through assemblies and classroom discussions.
- Supported by regular digital citizenship education.

### 5. Monitoring and Review

- The school principal will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The policy will be reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with Alberta Education requirements or changes to Ministerial Orders.

### Reference Documents:

- Alberta Education Ministerial Order 014/2024: *Student Use of Personal Mobile Devices and Access to Social Media in Schools*
- *Education Act (Alberta)*
- *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*
- *AISCA template*

<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR:</b>				
<b>APPLIES TO:</b>				
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