



October 20, 2025

VERMILION FORKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

School District No. 58 (Nicola Similkameen)
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Vermilion Forks School Personal Digital Device Use Policy

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Personal digital devices, especially cell phones, are part of modern life, and they can have both positive and negative impacts on student learning. A major challenge that schools face is student use of personal digital devices during instructional time for non-educational purposes.

While cell phones are the primary personal digital device for most students, *a personal digital device includes, but is not limited to, any person's electronic device that can be used to communicate or to access the internet, such as cell phones, tablets, smart watches, gaming devices and electronic toys, and includes the use of earbuds and headphones.*

At Vermilion Forks Elementary we have concerns around personal digital device use:

- *Digital devices have become a distraction to learning*
- *An increase in student reliance on being connected to social media*
- *An increase in gaming and video watching during class time*
- *Reduced interpersonal relations and face-to-face conversations*

There are great opportunities when personal digital devices are used as educational tools by students and teachers. However, when they are used as entertainment devices during class time there is a negative impact on student learning and engagement. Personal digital devices, (as listed above) will not be permitted during instructional time, except when teachers have given students instructions to use their cell phones for a specific purpose.

To help reduce temptation for students to use their phones they **SHOULD** be turning their phones to silent and placing them in their lockers. Locks will be provided for each student to secure their devices and personal belongings. If a student chooses to bring their personal device to school, it will be solely their responsibility to ensure it is away and secure. If this is not something that you feel your child can navigate, please do not send it to school.

Students may only use their devices before and after school. Devices should be stored in their lockers between these times. *Students with documented disabilities, unique learning abilities, or health-related requirements will still be able to use personal digital devices in line with their designated support plans and Individual Education Plans (IEP).*

If students are found with their phone in the classroom without teacher permission, they will be asked to place it in their locker. It will be recorded and if this happens often, parents will be asked to come and pick up the phone from the school and it will be encouraged that they leave it at home going forward. Parents/Guardians, while we do understand that sometimes you need to contact your child, please restrict this to before school, at lunch, or after school. In case of an emergency, please contact the school office at 250-295-6642.

Thank-you for your support and if you have any questions, please contact me.

Pete van Genne
Principal