



DIGITAL DEVICE & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Mobile phones and other devices have become integrated in our everyday lives. They are incredibly powerful learning tools, but they can also become terrible anchors of social pressure and addiction.

Our school acknowledges this reality and but also remains cautious about young people's relationship with their devices. The world of the internet, video games and social media are often segregated from the real world (and their parents) in the eyes of our students. Our team hopes to work with parents to help teach the students about the social rules that remain important even in a digital world and to promote a healthy balance.

Our school believes the following:

- It is still very important for students to work on healthy social relationships in the digital age.
- A phone can never replace good parents, friends, family, or teachers.
- Students' young brains (especially in secondary 1) are not equipped to resist their devices.
- Phones, apps, and games are strategically designed to be addictive.
- Addiction to devices and screens can hinder your children's emotional, social, intellectual health and development.
- Social media platforms have become safe havens for illicit activities that your children are vulnerable to and beyond the protection of adults.
- The school, even virtually, remains an important gathering point for young people to engage in healthy, inter-personal communication and learn social skills.

Our school team has observed that unsupervised use of digital devices and social media prevents students from:

- Getting proper amount of sleep.
- Forming healthy body image concepts and nutritional values.
- Developing healthy peer relationships and interpersonal communication skills.
- Committing to meaningful pursuits such as intellectual curiosity and healthy living.
- Developing important human sentiments such as sympathy and empathy.
- Leading a daily routine with minimal stress and social pressure.
- Maintaining focus on priorities such as success in school.

Our school team strongly recommends the following to parents:

- Plan non-screen time with your family and friends.
- Engage your children in discussions of the perils of excessive screen time.
- Remain cautious of and review their children's consumption of digital media.
- Actively limit their children's screen time, especially outside of school.
- Regularly examine their children's phone apps to check for inappropriate activity such as Social media apps that are not age-inappropriate, Video games, Dating apps & Gambling apps.

Digital device regulations

- **The use and possession of digital devices and social media is strictly prohibited during class time.**
- **Students' use of digital devices and social media must always be in accordance with the QVA Code of Conduct.**
- Students are not permitted to call or text, even with their parents, during class time.
- It is required for students to store their personal digital devices in a separate area during class time.
- Students are responsible for using technology in a lawful, responsible, and ethical manner consistent with the purposes for which it is provided outside of school hours – inappropriate uses of technology outside of the school may be subject to school discipline. In extreme cases, incidents of harassment or personal threats may be subject to school or legal consequences.
- Students are to protect themselves and others by not engaging in and reporting digital abuse of people and property.
- Students are to ensure that the privacy of their own information is not broadcast publicly. The school is unable to protect those who post or share their likeness or personal information in a public domain.
- Please note that the school will not be held responsible for the loss of or damage to digital devices belonging to students.
- **Parents are advised that school-aged children are below the minimum age required for many social media platforms and are not able to give informed consent to have their photos shared through group chats or social media platforms.**