Western Cape
Government

Education

Guidelines on cellular phones and other mobile technologies in public schools 2021

GUIDELINES ON CELLULAR PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1 Definitions

In these guidelines, **any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned,** bears the same meaning assigned to it, unless the context indicates otherwise:

"access" means the opportunity or means of retrieving information;

"blogs" weblogs (blogs) are online journals created by individuals or groups and stored on the internet. They are usually text based, but also include other media such as images, video and sound content.

"browsers" are tools to access the internet;

"cloud computing" is a term used to describe delivering hosted services such as infrastructure, platform and software services to other devices on demand;

"cyberbullying" refers to wilful and repeated harm inflicted using computers, cellular phones and mobile devices and other digital devices;

"cybercrime" or computer crime is a form of crime where the internet or computers are used as a medium to commit crime;

"cybersecurity" computer security includes protection of information and property from theft, corruption or natural disaster, while allowing the information and property to remain accessible and productive to its intended users;

"cyberstalking" means individuals keep track of a user's activities and information;

"digital literacy" means the ability to find, discern, select and use online information appropriately;

"digital footprint" means the collection of data, which includes images, videos and text, posted by an individual online;

"digital tattoo" refers to the permanent nature of a user's actions and communications online, it is also known as digital footprint;

"eEducation" consists of eLearning, eTeaching, eAwareness and all the administrative responsibilities connected to these actions;

"eLearning" is a broad term that generally refers to any kind of learning that is done with a computer, mobile device and internet connection. It is widely used by individuals, educational institutions and businesses. eLearning includes mLearning;

"eMaturity" measures the extent of use of ICTs by a school. It assesses the different levels of use by learners, teachers, and school management.

"e-Readiness" measures the capacity of a school to use ICTs by assessing the physical, management, social, and educational conditions in place that lead to the adoption of ICT.

"firewall" is part of a computer system or network that is designed to block unauthorised access while permitting authorised communications;

"hacking" is gaining access to an electronic device or system by using techniques or mechanisms that were not intended to provide access. A "hacker" would, therefore, be someone who "illegally gains access to and sometimes tampers with information in a computer system" (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary);

"ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies)" is defined as forms of technologies that are used to create, store, share or transmit, exchange information; radio, television, video, DVD, telephone (both fixed and mobile phones), satellite systems, computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as video-conferencing and electronic mail;

"ICT culture" is the beliefs, practices and attitudes that support the use of ICTs in the school.

"mLearning" is a broad term that generally refers to any kind of learning that is done with a mobile device supplied directly on the device, as an application, game or similar content; – or accessed via the internet. It is widely used by individuals, educational institutions and businesses;

"mobi-site" is a regular Web site accessible from Internet browsers on any device, including desktop computers.

"phablet" is a smartphone that has a screen intermediate in size between that of a typical smartphone and a tablet computer;

"phishing" is the fraudulent attempt to obtain sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details by disguising oneself as a trustworthy entity in an electronic communication;

"sexting" is sending explicit messages, photos, or video via cell phone, computer, or any digital device. Sexting includes photos and videos containing nudity or simulated sex acts. It also includes text messages that discuss or propose sexual acts;

"smartphone" is a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, internet access and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps;

"virtual reality" is the computer-generated simulations of a three-dimensional image or environment that can be interacted with in a seemingly real or physical way by a person using special electronic equipment such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors;

"VR" is the abbreviation for virtual reality;

"URL (Uniform Resource Locator)" is a web address that identifies a specific website, e.g. https://www.education.gov.za;

"white-list" is an approved list; often used with regard to internet content filtering. A whitelist only includes addresses (such as URLs or email) that have been specifically vetted in advance.

2 Legislative framework

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996)
https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/images/a108-96.pdf

South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (Act 84 of 1996)
https://www.westerncape.gov.za/sites/www.westerncape.gov.za/files/documents/departments/education/schools_act.pdf

Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Act 76 of 1998)
https://www.westerncape.gov.za/sites/www.westerncape.gov.za/files/documents/2004/10/a76-98.pdf

Western Cape Government Guidelines on Social Media and School Networking in Public Schools, 2017
https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/circulars/circulars17/e11_17.html

Electronic Communications Act, 2005 (Act 36 of 2005)
http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/za/za082en.pdf

Films and Publications Act, 1996 (Act 65 of 1996)
https://www.saps.gov.za/resource_centre/acts/downloads/films_publications_act_child_pornography.pdf

Protection from Harassment Act, 2011 (Act 17 of 2011)
https://www.gov.za/documents/protection-harassment-act

Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977)
https://www.gov.za/documents/criminal-procedure-act-1977-26-mar-2015-1224

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 32 of 2007)
https://www.gov.za/documents/criminal-law-sexual-offences-and-related-matters-amendment-act

Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978) with amendments
https://www.gov.za/documents/copyright-act-16-apr-2015-0942

Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005) with amendments
https://www.gov.za/documents/childrens-act

Regulation of Interception of Communications and Provision of Communication-Related Information Act (RICA), 2002 (Act 70 of 2002)
http://www.saflii.org/za/legis/num_act/roiocapocia2002943.pdf

Digital Wellness Programme – Resource and Concept, University of Pretoria, October 2015
http://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/609/ZP_Resources/Toolkit/october-2015-8-of-8-roadmap-for-campus-community-a5ss.zp95310.pdf

Guidelines on e-Safety in schools: Educating towards responsible and ethical use of ICT in education
https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/circulars/minutes18/CMminutes/del4_18.pdf

White Paper on e-Education: Transforming learning and teaching through information and communication technologies: Draft
https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/267341.pdf
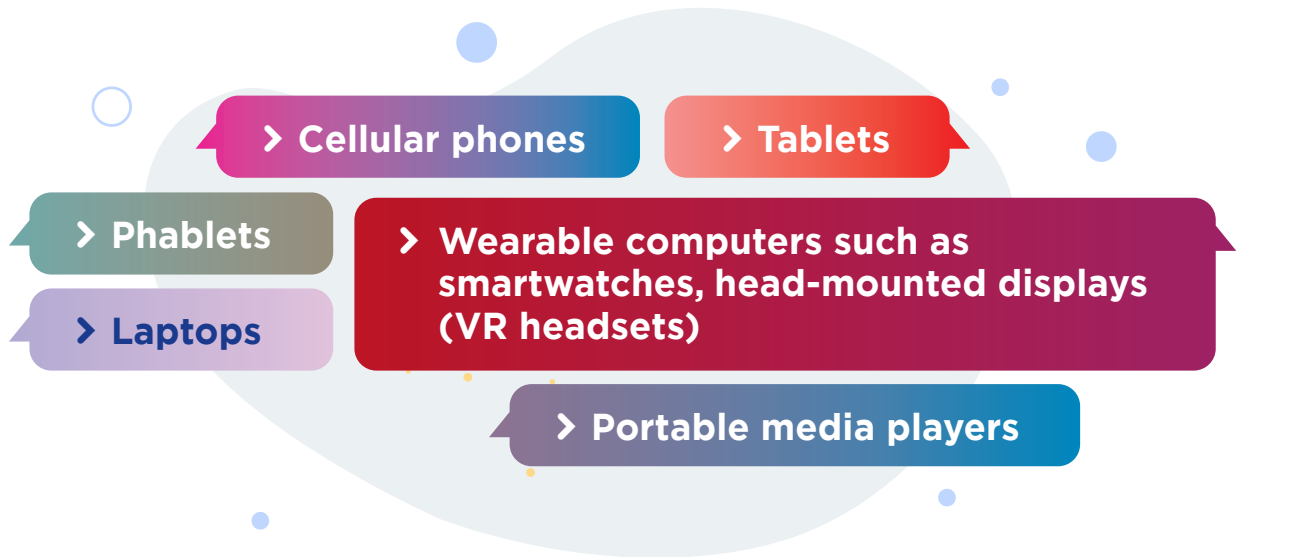
3 Purpose

These guidelines are designed to:

(a) Create awareness about some of the opportunities presented by cellular phones and mobile devices for learners, teachers, School Management Teams (SMTs), parents and schools within the learning environment, including:

   (i) the need to adopt technological and mobile devices in the school environment to enhance learning and teaching;

   (ii) the potential benefits and risks associated with these cellular phones and mobile devices;

   (iii) the potential cyber risks that technological and mobile devices pose as well as restorative principles and measures to mitigate those risks;

   (iv) guidance on the use of online platforms, online behaviour and social media communications between learners, teachers, learners and teachers, as well as between a parent of a learner and a teacher at a public school; and

(b) Assist public schools to develop their own policies in order to regulate the use of cellular phones and mobile devices at these schools.

(c) In order for a cellular phone and mobile device policy to be effective in schools, it must be inextricably linked with other school policies. It should be read in conjunction with the school's own policies:

> Code of Conduct
> Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Teachers
> Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for Learners
> ICT policy

4 Scope

These guidelines apply to all learners and teachers at public schools in the Western Cape.

These guidelines include the use of all handheld and/or smart devices:

> Cellular phones

> Tablets

> Phablets

> Wearable computers such as smartwatches, head-mounted displays (VR headsets)

> Laptops

> Portable media players

5 Introduction

An ever-increasing use of technology in society has allowed easier, faster and cheaper access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which is also now a reality in the Western Cape with the Western Cape Government Broadband Project allowing learners to connect to the internet.

The pervasiveness of cellular phones and mobile devices is often negatively publicised although cellular phones and mobile devices have a far-reaching footprint, even in the most rural of areas.

The advantages of using cellular phones and mobile devices for education outweigh the disadvantages; however, this needs to be managed thoughtfully and responsibly in order to ensure the protection of our children. It is essential that schools are aware of how to manage cellular phones and mobile devices so that their learners have positive and safe experiences when using these devices. The learners need to understand the implications of irresponsible use and need to be accountable for their behaviour. It is also essential that parents/guardians share the responsibility, as access to technology is not confined to the school or the time spent in the school environment.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is responding positively by providing all role players (SMTs, teachers, learners and parents/guardians) with guidelines to ensure they are equipped to manage both the risks and the benefits.

5.1 WCED eLearning Sidekick

WCED eLearning have created a simple, instructional and helpful Mobi-site that will help to upskill teachers and officials called the eLearning SideKick.

The SideKick houses different categories that will assist teachers to enhance learning and teaching. It provides opportunities for teachers to create innovative lessons using a curated list of digital tools, further their professional development, provide access to resources and infographics and be informed about the architectural landscape of eLearning and how to manage it. The eLearning Sidekick is also dedicated to empowering teachers on cyber wellness and provides them with an abundance of resources such as infographics, social media cards, guidelines, workbooks and videos.

See the **eLearning SideKick** link here:

https://wcedonline. westerncape.gov.za/ elearning

6 Adoption of technological and mobile devices to enhance learning and teaching

Mobile devices have become ubiquitous. This ubiquity and ease of access demonstrates its invaluable use for learners and teachers. Mobile devices can be employed to impart knowledge and enhance teaching practices. Besides using mobile devices for socialization and recreational purposes, it can also be used to search information, a tool to improve productivity and can be used for learning and academic purposes; to name a few. There are multiple tools and applications on mobile devices that can help to disseminate knowledge through the facilitation of teachers.

The acceptance of technology is improved when teachers can perceive the ease of use and the effective use of technology. It is argued that one can predict the overall use of technology through changing attitudes and intentions which motivates the actual use of technology.

Adopting mobile devices strengthens collaboration and connectedness. The use of mobile devices can offer support through personal learning networks or collaborative networks with colleagues and/ or teacher peers. Attempts to adopt technology can be aided by asking assistance to improve one's attitude and the effective use of technology and mobile devices.

If one understands the functional and effective use of a technological device and one can perceive its ease of use as either easy, medium or difficult, it will determine one's attitude towards using the device. With a positive attitude or negative attitude, it will strengthen or diminish one's reasons for using the device and ultimately lead to using or not using technology.

## 7 Mobile technologies can assist with developing a learner-centred approach

Learner-centred teaching is an approach that puts the learner at the centre of the learning. This means that the learner can pace their learning and be responsible for their own learning. The teacher enacts the role of the facilitator of learning. Mobile technologies and devices allow the learners to navigate through online platforms that serve in their education. Learners can create content and produce media, research valuable resources, use learning applications to boost performance, collaborate with peers, use the device to help democratise learner voices and collate resources as an educational learning hub and support.

There are many advantages to a learner-centred approach using mobile devices:

> It improves participation

> It improves the retention of knowledge

> It motivates learning

> Its engaging nature boosts performance and learning activities

> It develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills

> It fosters collaborative learning

> It makes learning more engaging and fun

> It encourages multiple perspectives

> It improves literacy and reading

> It provides accessibility to content in an offline environment (Learners can download from school or public WIFI and access content at home)

8 Advantages of the use of cellular phones and mobile devices in the school environment

"it will be beneficial to allow learners to have access to cellular phones and mobile devices in their educational environment"
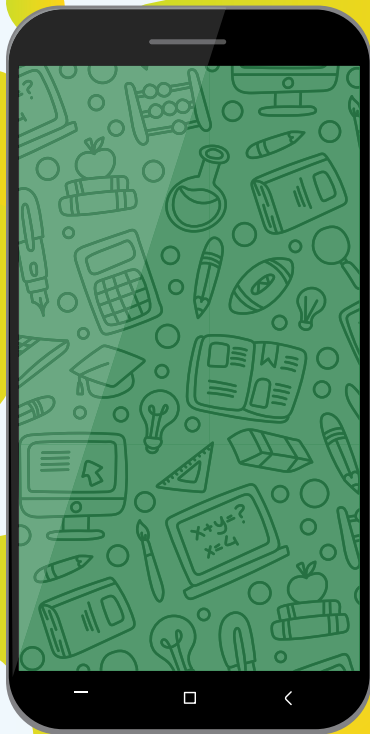
In the South African context, the concept of eEducation revolves around the use of ICT to accelerate the achievement of national education goals and prepare learners for the 21st century. In order to attain these outcomes, it will be beneficial to allow learners to have access to cellular phones and mobile devices in their educational environment as there are many advantages:

(a)	It enables instant communication and functions as a classroom collaboration tool, connecting learners to other learners, teachers and related professional support services;

(b)	Quick notes (voice, video or images) as a learning or memory aid;

(c)	Calendar to organise the learner and teacher's workload, homework tool and for plotting assessment and extra-mural activities;

(d)	Information tool – allows easy and quick access to information, resources and tools as well as curriculum support, making learning a personal experience in a safe environment;

(e)	Gateway to cloud computing – allows the user to access and upload files and information to their cloud storage space

(f)	Tool to access and use applications (apps) such as calculator, translator, polling/voting, audio recorder, camera, video recorder, educational apps, subject-specific educational apps, etc.;

(g)	Sharing information with others, such as showing class projects to parents, sending missed assignments to classmates that are absent, uploading and downloading educational resources;

(h) Cloud/drive sharing, such as downloading files, sharing files with other users for professional and academic purposes;

(i) App/software integration to enhance professional and academic productivity and efficiency;

(j) Mediates differing learning styles – allows the teacher to accommodate all learning styles and overcome learning barriers;

(k) Simulates physical experiences on a digital platform to boost creative and critical thinking;

(l) Paperless homework – this helps in protecting the natural environment and enhances learner accessibility and productivity;

(m) Easy access to automated assessments and feedback;

(n) Gamification, using play as a creative and innovative approach for assessment and learner engagement; and

(o) Communication tool between teachers, learners, school and parent.

(p) Easy access to mobile sites

(q) Teachers can display QR codes around the classroom or school to provide learners with curriculum resources, host a scavenger hunt, provide access to applications, websites and other useful learning information. QR codes can also be used to enhance communication by gaining feedback from learners about cyber issues prevalent in the school.

(r) Record evidence such as video or audio recordings for practical subjects (e.g. oral, dance routines, drama routines, etc.) for formal assessments

(s) Teachers can create short videos to explain key areas of work.

9 Disadvantages of the use of cellular phones and mobile devices in the school environment

9.1 **The ability of cellular phones and mobile devices to make recordings (sound, image or video), can be abused by:**

(a) recording individuals without their knowledge;

(b) recording and sharing inappropriate behaviour;

(c) using a cellular phone or a mobile device for illegal offences, such as committing a crime;

(d) using a cellular phone or a mobile device for cheating in a test or examination; and

(e) using cellular phone or a mobile device for non-educational purposes during contact time can be intrusive and disruptive.

(f) The sharing of login credentials and passwords to complete tasks and assessments on behalf of someone else.

9.2 **Disadvantages of the use of wearable computers (i.e. smart watches):**

(i) The smart watch screen is too small for educational purposes.

(Ii) Bluetooth compatibility to cellular phones and mobile devices make access easier, thus can be used as a cheating tool;

Schools should reconsider allowing learners to bring smartwatches to school as it does not serve necessary for educational purposes and may cause rise to other concerns.

10 Cyber risks and mitigations

10.1 Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying has been conceptualised "as the use of the internet or other digital communication devices to insult or threaten someone". The following are different forms of cyberbullying:

> **Flaming:** online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.

> **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending nasty, mean, and insulting messages.

> **Denigration:** "Dissing" someone online. Sharing gossip or posting rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.

> **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage the person's reputation or friendships.

> **Outing:** Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online.

> **Trickery:** Talking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information or images online.

> **Exclusion:** intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.

10.2 Teachers and learners at public schools must give due consideration to the following when using cellular phones and mobile devices:

(a)   Cellular phones and mobile devices have to be managed in an educationally sound manner as, by the

very nature of their mobility, they can be intrusive.

(b) Cognizance must be taken of damaging the self-esteem of teachers and learners by the easy availability of pornographic content, cellular phone camera, recording facility, sending of harassing or threatening messages and access to the internet;

(c) Cellular phone cameras (still and video) must not be used:

(i) in banned spaces, for example changing rooms, toilets, gyms and swimming pools;

(ii) to film people and their activities without the knowledge of permission.

(d) An Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) in a school should specify when and for what purpose the use of cellular phones and mobile devices is acceptable in a school and have steps in place to ensure compliance. This includes sending and receiving calls to/from parents/guardians.

(e) It is recommended that the AUP is mentioned in the code of conduct.

(f) Learners carrying a cellular phone can be a target for thieves; therefore awareness around safety of learners on their way to and from schools is a major consideration.

(g) Privacy and circumspection must be responsibly applied, as cellular phones and mobile devices contain personal images, messages and email communication that may be forwarded to other users and/or placed in the public domain.

(h) All users should take care not to share compromising images or inappropriate messages as they leave a digital footprint that may damage their reputation later on in life.

10.3 Positive Peer Influence

Learners need to:

• be positive role models (e.g. share positive content, harness the affordances of technology for the benefit of society)

• advocate positive online behaviour (e.g. stand up for their peers online, report cases of cyberbullying to an adult or to authorities, post encouraging remarks online)

Actions:

• Support learner participation in Safer Internet Day (SID) activities, raise awareness of emerging online issues and reflect on current concerns.

• Develop awareness training to build resilience and peer support initiatives.

• Foster collaboration with parents and ensure parents are knowledgeable about the cyber risks associated with online behaviour and activity

• Publish an annual safer internet report.

11 Roles and responsibilities

11.1 Public schools will have to:

(a) draw up and publish a policy on the use of cellular phones and mobile devices with the input from all stakeholders (school SMT, governing body, parents, teachers and learners); and

(b) have regular cyber wellness seminars addressing all relevant concerns related to the use of cellular phones and mobile devices, including:

    (i) Cyber-bullying

    (ii) Social media responsibility

    (iii) Digital foot printing

    (iv) Digital citizenship and responsibility

    (v) General cyber safety tools and tips

(c) display cyber safety and digital responsibility posters around all recreational areas and in the classrooms. Download Cyber Wellness Posters from the eLearning SideKick and share with all stakeholders; see link **http://bit.ly/wced_cyberwellness**

(d) teachers and learners must sign an AUP to use cellular phones and mobile devices within the school environment;

(e) sensitise learners and teachers to the appropriate and responsible behaviour for online activities; and

(f) educate learners that all users are entitled to reasonable privacy and therefore it is an offense to attempt to access other learners or teachers' personal files and photos.

(g) cellular phones and mobile devices may only be used in class for educational purposes according to the instruction of the teacher to be appropriately incorporated into the learning program;

(h) inform learners and parents that the safeguarding of cellular phones and mobile devices is the learner's responsibility and is brought to school at own risk;

    (i) take appropriate action against any learner who:

    (i) photographs or films, for example a fight on the school premises

and/or other individuals without their consent;

(ii) sends harassing or threatening messages;

(iii) are in possession, viewing and/or circulating any unacceptable content such as pornography, abusive or age-restricted content;

(iv) is caught using a cellular phone or mobile device in exams or assessments;

(v) deliberately tries to access undesirable websites by using 'hacking methods' and break through the firewalls set by the security standards of the state or school

(j) It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the parents, teachers and learners are well informed of the cellular phone and mobile device policy of the school and clearly understand the consequences thereof;

(k) The use of hand-held devices, wearable devices during examinations:

At own discretion, schools may consider the banning of hand-held devices, wearable devices (i.e. smartwatches) during examinations to ensure the integrity of the examinations.

11.2 The teacher should:

(a) discuss the use of cellular phones and mobile devices in class and create boundaries around the use of cellular phones and mobile devices;

(b) discuss the values around respect of property, consequences of taking and sharing inappropriate information and content;

(c) teach the learners about the images they create online by using their cellular phone with integrity and that there are consequences to their actions;

(d) explain to learners how and when cellular phones and mobile devices will be used as part of learning and teaching, for example:

(i) Take photos to use in projects (plants, animals, school event, etc.)

(ii) Record videos to use in projects or for notes to refer to for learning later (experiments, brainstorming, drama or visual arts performances, etc.)

(iii) Create own videos that could be viewed and evaluated by teacher or for peer-assessment activity, etc.

(iv) Create audio recordings for oral, book reviews, interviews, etc.

(e) discuss the difference of allowing to access the internet on the school network and swopping to own mobile data to access the internet and that this is only allowed on agreement of the teacher during class contact time;

(f) have classroom rules and etiquette about cellular phones and mobile devices in class such as:

(i) Place cellular phones and mobile devices on the desk.

(ii) Turn cellular phones onto silent.

(iii) Do not answer calls during lessons.

(iv) Do not send SMS/IM during lessons.

(v) Do not participate on personal social media platforms during lessons.

(vi) Only use device for activities as decided by the teacher for that lesson.

(vii) Look after your own cellular phone.

(g) follow the same rules as created with the learners.

11.3 Learners:

a) should only use cellular phones and mobile devices when usage will not disrupt the normal school routine or per instruction of a teacher;

b) should display courtesy, consideration and respect for others when using a cellular phone; and

c) should understand that there will be actions taken should they engage in the following:

(i) Photograph or film, for example a fight on school premises, and/or other individuals without their consent.

(ii) Send harassing or threatening message.

(iii) Are in possession, viewing and/or circulating any unacceptable content such as pornography, abusive or age-restricted content.

(iv) Are caught using a cellular phone or mobile device in exams or assessments; deliberately trying to access undesirable websites by using "hacking methods" and breaking through the firewalls set by the security standards of the state or the school.

d) may only use cellular phones and mobile devices in class for educational purposes according to the instruction of the teacher;

e) may not use cellular phones and mobile devices for entertainment purposes, such as watching movies or streaming entertainment content (i.e. movies, TV series, music videos and music);

f) may not use cellular phones and mobile devices for downloading entertainment content for non-educational purposes;

g) may only have accessories such as earphones in class according to the instruction of the teacher or during non-contact time (i.e. you cannot listen to music, radio or any audio broadcast without earphones in corridors, playground, etc.);

h) must be responsible for the safeguarding of own cellular phone and the school cannot be held accountable for theft, damage or loss thereof;

i) should be guided to use cellular phones and mobile devices in a respectful and responsible, value-driven way in schools and understand that it is a privilege and not a right; and

j) should avoid becoming involved in risky or unlawful acts or behaviour, such as theft, bullying, buying and selling of stolen cellular phones and mobile devices, publishing compromising information that may harm another individual.

12 ICT Policies and Acceptable Use Agreements

The ICT policy of the school plays a strong role in school development as well as learner and staff accountability and responsible use. The policy can be said to describe the general organisational attitude or approach to an issue. A policy can be supported by several procedures which define the rules, regulations, methods, timing, place and people responsible for implementing the policy. A policy must assist staff members and learners to navigate through the ICT environment and facilitate the integration of ICT in learning and teaching. To achieve this, the school should model proactivity and a values-driven attitude to incorporate innovative practices and infuse technologies into the whole school environment and curriculum delivery.

Each public school should develop its own ICT policy to cover:

- Goals, objectives and principles for ICT usage in the school

- The application of ICTs to support both administration and curriculum delivery in the school.

- The management and physical usage of ICTs in the school, which includes management of assets and data, as well as planning and budgeting

- Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders

A basic ICT policy can prioritise the following:

- Explanation of overall approach to ICTs, especially the level of management commitment to the use of ICTs

- Goals for ICT usage in the school

- Prioritizing the use of the computer labs, together with an indication of funds that will be allocated to maintain and manage the laboratory

- Timetabling the use of the computer labs

- The use of ICTs for school administration and management functions

- Roles and responsibilities of the ICT co-ordinator/champion as well as ICT teams

- Identification of key training needs for teachers, administrative staff, SMT

- Rules and procedures for security, care and management of equipment for all stakeholders

- Acceptable use of agreement for all stakeholders regarding the use ICTs and equipment

If your ICT policy is to be successful, it should serve three purposes:

- Set out the aims and values for ICT which had been agreed by the staff and supported by teachers and learners;

- Make explicit the principles behind the effective learning and application of ICT;

- Identifying other principles that the school needs to address, and which formed the basis of a development plan with specific targets.

13 Review of the guidelines

These guidelines must be reviewed when developing the school's unique ICT Policy and Acceptable Use Agreements or in the case of changed circumstances, including changes to legislation and/or regulations and budgetary circumstances.

Schools need to decide on their own sanctions in the case of mishandling, theft, and inappropriate use of devices.

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