Western Cape Government

Education

GUIDELINES ON CELLULAR PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES

IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2018

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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 through the use of 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;

"**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;

"**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 – for reasons of curiosity or interest rather than malicious intent – 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;

"**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;

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

"**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)

http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Act108of1996s.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 Provincial School Education Act, 1997 (Act 12 of 1997)

https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/documents/legislative_acts/act12-97.pdf

Western Cape Government Guidelines on Social Media and School Networking in Public

Schools, 2017

http://www.hhhs.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/GUIDELINES-ON-SOCIAL-MEDIA-ANDSOCIAL-NETWORKING-IN-PUBLIC-SCHOOLS-2017.pdf

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)

http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2011-017.pdf

Criminal Procedure Act, 1977 (Act 51 of 1977)

http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/1977-051.pdf

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007 (Act 32 of 2007)

http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2007-032.pdf

Copyright Act, 1978 (Act 98 of 1978)

http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Act%2098%20of%201978.pdf

Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005)

http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2005-038%20childrensact.pdf

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

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 potential benefits and risks associated with these cellular phones and mobile devices;

   (ii)   guidance on the use of online platforms, online behaviour and social media 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 has to 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 Broadband Initiative (WCBBI) 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.

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

6.1 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 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.

6.2   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.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 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;

(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 student 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.

7.2 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 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.

7.3 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.

## 8.	Disadvantages of the use of cellular phones and mobile devices in the school environment

8.1	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.

8.2.	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.

9.   Review of the guidelines

These guidelines must be reviewed when the need arises 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.