



The Settlers High School

POLICY ON THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (AT SCHOOL)

January 2018

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TSHS:	The Settlers High School
TRACKING SYSTEM:	CIS
WCED:	Western Cape Education Department

1. PREAMBLE

TSHS realizes that part of the 21st century is adapting to the changing methods of communication. The proliferation of the ownership and usage of the electronic devices in their various manifestations, and the increasing sophistication of its derivatives in its various guises, makes it necessary for the usage of these devices to be ordered, controlled and monitored by, in and through school.

The purpose of this policy is to help preserve and foster a safe, non-disruptive educational environment for effective teaching and learning, to maintain and foster order and discipline, to deter learners from actions detrimental to themselves, their peers or the general value systems embraced by the school, and to achieve these objectives consistent with the law.

2. LEGAL BASIS

The school has built its policy on the following premises:

- 2.1. Given the need for school safety and the protection and well-being of individual learners, the authority of the school to conduct searches is held to pre-empt an individual learner's right to privacy. Consequently, school officials are empowered to conduct searches of a Learner's property when there is reasonable suspicion that s/he may be in violation of a school rule, a policy or the law.
- 2.2. All school-related property is subject to search at any time. School-related property includes, but is not limited to, computers, electronic devices and related or similar devices and items used during or in the support of education-related programmes or activities, and in respect of this policy is deemed to include also privately owned devices brought onto the school property or to any school, and school sponsored or school related activity or function.
- 2.3. Before undertaking a search of any privately-owned or school issued device, however, the school official performing such search must have a reasonable suspicion that the learner has indulged in an action which violates the law, a school rule or policy.
- 2.4. 'Reasonable suspicion' may be created by firsthand eyewitness observations or reports, information from a normally reliable informant and suspicious behaviour.

3. ACCEPTABLE USAGE

The following list, which is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, provides examples of practices which are deemed **acceptable** in terms of this policy:

- 3.1 The authorised and monitored use of electronic devices in order to enhance classroom learning with instructions from the teacher in the classroom.

- 3.2 Tracing of the whereabouts of family members and friends, lift-givers and the like during the allowed time slots when these electronic devices can be on.
- 3.3 The rescheduling of lifts or extracurricular activities – for example, in the light of changed weather conditions, unforeseen delays or earlier than expected ending of activities during the allowed time slots when these electronic devices can be on.
- 3.4 The enhancement of classroom notes, e.g. by means of recording a teacher’s lessons and snapping a picture of the board PROVIDED THIS IS AUTHORIZED IN ADVANCE BY THE TEACHER.
- 3.5 The taking of pictures of own projects to show to parents, thus allowing them to be involved in group class activities.
- 3.6 The learner must be aware of “stranger danger” when communicating on-line.
- 3.7 The learner will be polite and responsible when communicating with others, not using strong, inappropriate or aggressive and abusive language.
- 3.8 Every learner who is issued with a device by the school will be required to acquire a screen guard and a protective cover (to be provided at the learner’s own expense).
- 3.9 It will be the learner’s responsibility to ensure that the device is charged for use during the school day.
- 3.10 The photographs and videos taken of learners do not require express permission and may be used for purposes of the school (e.g social media and banners) which is not in any way negative or compromising.

4 UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICES

The following list, which is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, provides examples of practices which are deemed **unacceptable** in terms of this policy:

- 4.1 Disrupting academic time: e.g. by allowing the ringing of electronic devices or the sending or receiving of text messages during class or updating or checking your status on various social media platforms during class time or browsing the internet without the teacher’s permission.
Learners may use their electronic devices/electronic devices before school until the first bell at 07.50. Thereafter electronic devices/electronic devices may only be used for explicitly educational purposed sanctioned by teachers. Otherwise they can only be used at breaks or outside of school hours where calls/messages may be received outside the school building and corridors. Learners are free to use their electronic devices after 14.45 Monday to Fridays.
- 4.2 The theft, borrowing, using, breaking, damaging, defacing, hiding, removing or going into the memory or storage capacity of any electronic device belonging to someone else.
- 4.3 Sending hoax bomb or other threats so as to avoid or condense class time, or disrupt tests or exams.
- 4.4 Logging into another learner’s / teacher’s account.
- 4.5 The use of electronic devices to gain an advantage or break or circumvent exam/school rules or procedures.
- 4.6 Alerting miscreants to the presence/approach of the principal, a teacher or other disciplinary officer.
- 4.7 The use of an electronic device in the selling or distribution or procurement of drugs or other banned or illegal substances or contraband, the dissemination of threats, cyber-bullying or harassment, unwanted text messaging, or the arrangement or co-ordination of anti-social activities.
- 4.8 The taking, viewing or distribution of inappropriate photos, making video clips of fighting, capturing inappropriate sexual behaviour of learners (or teachers or self) or downloading inappropriate images from the internet.
- 4.9 The provoking of a teacher and then capture and circulate the resultant response.
- 4.10 The playing of music through sound amplification equipment. Music can only be listened to through earphones and for the individual learners’ pleasure.
- 4.11 Publishing, posting, distributing or disseminating material or information that TSHS determines is threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, unlawful or hostile towards any individual or entity. This includes the spreading of rumours and misinformation.
- 4.12 Learners who choose to submit content onto websites or other forms of online media must ensure that their submission does not reflect poorly upon the school and bring the name of the school in disrepute.

- 4.13 Learners are prohibited from engaging in unauthorised and unlawful activities such as “hacking” or using the computer network to gain unauthorised and unlawful access to other computers, computer systems or accounts..

5 BRINGING ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO SCHOOL

Within these parameters, learners are allowed to bring electronic devices to school on the understanding that:

- 5.1 The use of electronic devices at school is a privilege which may be forfeited by any learner not abiding by the school’s Code of Conduct or the stipulations of this policy. On a “bring your own device” basis, it must be registered with the IT Administrator before it is allowed on the school network.
- 5.2 Learners are personally and solely responsible for the security of their electronic devices. Not the school, the staff nor the education department will assume any responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device, or any unauthorised use thereof.
- 5.3 If a departmentally or school issued electronic device is lost or stolen it must be reported to the IT Administrator so that a tracking device can be activated immediately upon the learner’s return to the school.
- 5.4 Confiscated electronic devices shall be stored in a secure location and will not be available to anyone until returned to the learner/parent/guardian.
- 5.5 There will be no use of an electronic device in any manner whatsoever during class time or in classrooms, except where such usage is specifically authorized by teachers for legitimate educational purposes, as part of lesson plans and/or academic programmes. Such usage is at the sole discretion of the supervising teacher, who is responsible for monitoring, controlling and overseeing such usage.
- 5.6 The use of a cell phone or electronic device to capture, store or transmit unauthorized pictures, or undesirable, illegal or pornographic material is strictly prohibited on the school premises, during school-sponsored or educational activities or outings, or while travelling to and from school or school sponsored outing or activities, again except where such usage is specifically authorized by teachers. Such authorization will normally only be granted for legitimate, broad educational purposes, as part of lesson plans and/or academic, sporting, cultural or service programmes. Such usage will be permitted at the sole discretion of the supervising teacher, who will be responsible for monitoring, controlling and overseeing such usage.
- 5.7 Use for purposes other than those listed above (e.g. to contact the home, to reschedule lifts, etc.) may be granted by a teacher or the responsible duty teacher in the discipline control room.
- 5.8 Use of electronic devices or electronic devices before the beginning of the school day, or after its conclusion, will not be controlled by the school, with the proviso that no provisions of the school’s Codes of Conduct are broken, and no actions referred to in point 4 (sub-points 4.1 to 4.12 inclusive), nor 5.3, nor any other inappropriate actions, are undertaken consequent on the use or possession of a cell phone or similar device.

6 OWNERSHIP AND PRIVACY

- 6.1 In order to manage the wellbeing and safety of all who are part of the school, and to maintain the integrity of school systems, the school reserves the right to check on usage and content (including by random monitoring) of any files, messages, pictures, images or similar which are created, received, stored, transferred to, viewed, read, sent from or received using a cell phone or other device present on school property (whether or not it belongs to the school), at a school or school-sponsored function or activity, or on the way to school or school sponsored activity, regardless of whether the device was actually used on school property, at a school function or not.
- 6.2 Access to the worldwide web, e-mail services, the internet and school servers at this school are filtered and managed in-house and also by the WCED. Communication via e-mail on the school system cannot therefore be regarded as private, and the same conditions apply to messages, data or images on any cell phone or similar device brought to, found at or used on or in close proximity to the school premises, at school, or during school or at a school or school sponsored function or activity.

- 6.3 It is a condition of the use of the permission granted in terms of this policy that the school has the right to investigate the e-mail or account and equipment, including electronic devices and similar devices, and also social networking domains such as Facebook and Twitter etc, of any user who, in the opinion of the principal or his/her delegate, which opinion shall be based on reasonable suspicion and/or first-hand eye-witness reports, might be transgressing the rules or the spirit of this policy.
- 6.4 In the event of any part of this policy being transgressed by a learner or other person using the equipment brought to school or a school or school sponsored activity or belonging to or in the possession of a Learner at school or a school or school-sponsored or school-approved activity, the following sanctions may be applied:
- 6.4.1 Any staff member who sees a learner using an electronic device in contravention of the specifications of this code shall deal with the infringement in terms of the code of conduct. Details of evidence of inappropriate content must be reported to the Deputy Principal.
- 6.4.2 If it is suspected, based on reasonable grounds, first-hand, eyewitness reports or clear evidence that anyone is using an electronic device/cell phone in contradiction of any of sections 4.3 to 4.12 and 5.3 of this code, those authorised to do so by the principal will be expected to intervene and inspect the contents of the device to determine whether it has been or is being used for a purpose which is contrary to school policy.
- 6.4.3 Should such evidence be found, it must be reported to the deputy principal, who may take the matter further, either through an internal disciplinary process, or by reporting it to other authorities, including the School Governing Body, the school counsellor, a social worker, the education department or the police.
- 6.5 In the event of severe contraventions of acceptable use when it is deemed necessary to confiscate electronic devices from a learner, the following sanctions will apply. When handheld devices like cell phones, tablets or other electronic devices are confiscated from a learner, the following sanctions will apply:
- 6.6
- 6.6.1 1st Offence:** The device may be confiscated **with the sim card** at the discretion of the teacher doing the confiscation for up to one week/5 full school days. It will be handed in at reception for safe keeping in the school safe. A pink confiscation slip will be completed with the owner of the device receiving the counterfoil with the date on which the device may be collected on it. **No device will be returned without the counterfoil being handed in.**
- 6.6.2 2nd Offence:** Refusal to hand over the device **with the sim card** for confiscation will result in confiscation for at least two weeks/10 full school days.
- 6.6.3 3rd Offence:** Viewed as serious misconduct (insubordination) standard procedure to be followed.
- 6.7 Learners may not tamper with or open the devices. Installation of software may only be done with prior permission obtained from the Computer Administrator.
- 6.8 Should a learner opt for a Bring Your Own Device system, that will be permitted, but high value devices are discouraged and proof of insurance will be required, as the school will not accept liability in the event of theft or damage.
- 6.9 Failure to abide by this Policy, as with other policies at TSHS, may result in disciplinary action as described in the school's Code of Conduct and School Rules.

7 RETRIEVAL OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES ISSUED BY THE SCHOOL

- 7.1 Ownership of electronic devices issued by the school reside with The Settlers High School and all the peripheral equipment which may also be issued to learners for their academic work remain the property of the school.
- 7.2 Learners will be required to return electronic devices to The Settlers High School:
- during the fourth term for safe storage and inspection.
 - periodic collection for scrutiny.
 - upon deregistration.
 - if the conditions of acceptable use have not been met.
 - if the school requires these devices for routine maintenance.
 - **GRADE 12 LEARNERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO RETURN THEIR SCHOOL ISSUED TABLETS AT THE END OF THE SEPTEMBER EXAMINATION PERIOD (unless an extension is negotiated with and granted by the management of the school).** All the electronic textbooks will still be available until the 31st December. This therefore allows for notes to be printed and viewed on other electronic devices until the period expires.
- 7.3 Devices will be checked periodically to ensure that they have been properly maintained and used, subject to fair wear and tear. If the device is in a poor state beyond reasonable wear and tear, the learner will be held responsible for it. (Examples of an unacceptable state is broken or lost keys, damaged screen, cracked bevel etc.)

REPLY SLIP

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the contents of the **Policy on the use of electronic devices, other electronic devices and social media (at school)**.

I have read and understand the agreement and will follow these guidelines when

- **I use the school/WCED ICT systems and equipment both in and out of school**
- **I use my own equipment in and out of school in a way that is related to me being a member of this school**

Name of learner

Grade and class

Signature of learner

Name of parent/guardian

Signature of parent/guardian

REPLY SLIP TO BE RETURNED CLASS TEACHER BY: _____