

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDS)

Questions and Answers

1. What is PED?

A PED is a Personal Electronic Device that is personally owned by an individual student. TDSB-owned assets (e.g., computers, assistive technologies) are not defined as PEDs.

2. Why are we allowing students to use PEDs?

On May 18, 2011, the Board passed a motion that recognizes the evolving nature of technology and the value of PEDs as a tool to enhance student learning and to support curriculum delivery. This recent decision formalizes the ability of teachers to determine the appropriate use of PED technology in a learning environment. It also provides for the use of PEDs by students outside of instructional time, as long as such usage does not distract from learning.

3. What are some of the potential benefits of PEDs in schools?

Students are “growing up in a digital age”; they spend many hours every week engaged with technology in numerous forms and ways: from communicating and consuming information on the internet, to social networking, videocasting and more.

The Director has stressed the importance of advancing technology throughout our Board to engage students, enhance teaching and learning, and improve student outcomes. When appropriately used in the school setting, PED;s can support student learning and promote digital citizenship in the 21st century.

4. What are some of the potential risks of PEDs in schools?

The unacceptable use of this technology can be disruptive and intrusive in the classroom, and can interfere in the day-to-day operations of the school. As well, academic integrity and personal privacy can be compromised through the inappropriate use of technology. Additional concerns may be centered around ensuring equity of access for all students and possible network performance and security issues.

5. Why are we phasing in the PEDs policy instead of starting immediately?

We anticipate significant changes in how, when and where PEDs will be used in schools. Careful, phased implementation ensures a smoother transition and successful outcome.

6. How will the new PEDs policy be implemented?

Phase One (June-Fall 2011):

- Identify and review impacted Board policies and procedures and draft an Acceptable Use Policy to include personal electronic devices and TDSB owned assets;
- Outline the acceptable, ethical and responsible use of current and emerging technologies on the Board's network infrastructure;
- Review and identify solutions to the potential risks.

Phase Two (Winter 2011-2012)

- Develop a professional learning plan for school staff to teach with PEDs and about Character Education and Digital Citizenship;
- Develop a communication plan and resources to promote the appropriate use of PEDs in learning environments (for students, teachers and parents/guardians);
- Update schools, staff and Trustees.

Phase Three (Spring to Fall 2012)

- Test/pilot a rollout framework;
- Implement the use of PED tools;
- Update schools, staff and Trustees.