



Student Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources

SUMMARY

This Northern Academy (NORTHERN) document sets policy and guidelines for electronic devices students are, and are not, allowed to bring or use on campus; the requirements and expectations for the use of such devices, and guidelines for acceptable use of school-provided technology and IT resources.

Why we regulate technology

At the very heart of a student's experience at Northern Academy is the furthered development of strong character and virtuous habits. The growth of a child through these formative years sets a course for the rest of their life, as they seek to form their own identity - to discover who they are.

As of the time of this policy update (Spring 2023), societal concerns are being raised about the cumulative effect of blue screen use, smart phones, Internet access and social media - from impacts on mental, emotional and physical health, to impairment of focus and critical thinking skills. Our youth are susceptible to these harmful effects, and the influences and currents of modern society and culture.

And it goes further. Through heavy, sustained use, technologies impact us psychologically, modifying our behavior on a mass scale as they compete for our awareness - as they were designed to do. Many young people struggle with real-world, personal relationships, when their experiences have been mostly virtual.

We greatly reduce the "noise" of the online experience, allowing our kids breathing room to relax and self-reflect; to discover who they are, and want to be. We help them build solid roots of self-assurance to weather life's unexpected - both highs and lows - through classical education and tradition.

Northern is not against technology, of course. It is a tool. We promote the responsible use of it, and we limit the parts of it that impact the healthy formation of one's identity and spirit, replaced instead with real world, lived experiences, and skill in developing responsible, personal relationships - to be their best.

Scope

Covered under the scope of this policy are all smartphones and "smart devices" (a "smart device" is any device that connects to, and/or allows browsing and searching of the Internet, either through a wifi connection or cellular data plan). Examples of devices include personal computers (desktops and laptops), Chromebooks, tablets, iPads and iPods, smartwatches and other similar computing devices.

Students are not allowed to possess or bring smartphones and smart devices on campus, either during school or off hours - including holidays and non-school days. Conditional exceptions can be considered and alternative arrangements made. One example is allowing new high school boarding students a period of limited use of their smartphones to help adjust to the culture and environment found at Northern. This would require permission from parents, and the terms and conditions of such arrangements will be determined by the Residential Director, and/or the school administration.

In-school technology

Northern provides computer lab use for various purposes, such as STEM/Northern Horizon programs, coding and platform development, graphic design, video production, etc.

Each year high school students (Gr. 9-12) are given Chromebooks for limited use in academic and arts programs. Use of the assigned Chromebooks is permitted during school hours in classrooms and study halls, as well as at home, under Homestay guardianship, and as boarding students staying in school dormitories. Chromebooks are to be used for school work, class work and assignments, and not for entertainment.

Web filtering and monitoring solutions are used for student safety and security. Northern Academy also uses GSuite for Education and its various components (GMail, Google Drive, Classroom, Calendar, etc.).

As mentioned, the use of personal smartphones and smart devices on campus is restricted. Students are allowed to have and use “dumbphones”, personal phones with no Internet browsing or access - talk and text only - for communication, but not during normal school hours. School hours are 8am to 5pm Monday – Friday, 9am to 3pm on Saturday.

During school hours, phones are provided in the Front Office for Day/Homestay students to use to contact parents, such as to arrange pickup or in urgent situations. A teacher or staff member is present. For international students, scheduled Skype access is provided in the dorms, and available on Chromebooks during personal time (non-school hours).

Unauthorized possession or use of computing devices is prohibited, and any student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary actions pursuant to the NA Discipline Policy, and/or Code of Conduct.

Earbuds, Headphones and Speakers

Earbuds and headphones are not to be used during normal school hours, nor during meals in the cafeteria, but can be used during one’s personal time after school.

Exceptions can be considered and allowed, such as reviewing video/audio class content and assignments, including teacher-approved use in study halls. This is handled on a case-by-case basis.

Use of bluetooth devices, and/or speakers to play music out loud, is not permitted on campus or in dorms (use earbuds and headphones), but exceptions are considered case-by-case, such as during school-sponsored events and activities.

Personal Electronics - misc

Apple and other smartwatches are smart devices, and not allowed. Other similar instruments with wifi capabilities (fitbit and exercise bracelets, wifi-capable mp3 players, etc.) also qualify as smart devices, and by default are restricted.

Please note there is no public wifi available for students. This is addressed below in **Network and Resources**.

Boarding Students

The dormitories are an extension of the school, and the rules stated in this policy, apply. In addition, access to technology and screen time, especially in the evenings, is regulated within the dorms themselves.

Students may use restricted cellphones (“dumb phones”)*, but not during homework time. Personal music (MP3) players are allowed, with the use of headphones and/or earbuds.

Violations of this policy and related school rules while in the dorms is also subject to disciplinary actions pursuant to the Boarding Student Handbook, in-dorm rules and policies, and the NA Discipline Policy.

Network and Resources

Northern’s Information Technology (IT) resources - our school network, wifi networks, Internet access, GSuite applications and other technology equipment and resources - are for school work and use.

These systems are provided for students to facilitate classwork/homework and assignments, conduct research, and communicate with others. Each student who is granted access will be responsible for that usage.

Public wifi is not available for students and their devices. Student Chromebooks, however, are connected.

ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES

Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules of proper conduct, behavior and relations, apply. Individual users of the school’s IT resources are responsible for their behavior and communications over the school network.

Student data files and other electronic storage areas (ex. GMail, Google Drive) will be treated like school lockers. This means that such areas shall be considered to be NA property and subject to control and inspection. The administration and/or its technology representative/designee may access all such files and communications without prior notice, to ensure system integrity and compliance with the requirements of the school and its policies. Parents and students should NOT expect information stored on these resources to be private.

Inappropriate use of IT resources may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the NA Disciplinary policy, and also include removal of devices and access, or suspension.

More open access and elevated privileges (Internet Privileges) may be provided to students who conduct themselves in a considerate and responsible manner. Conditions and requirements apply.

Use of devices and technologies - either personal or supplied by Northern - that violate this and other policies; and/or federal, state or local laws or regulations, is strictly prohibited, and may result in disciplinary action in compliance with applicable school guidelines and/or federal, state and local laws, including, but not limited to, suspension and/or revocation of access to the computer.

Google GSuite and other school-related logins and accounts are to be used only by the student named as user of the student account. Any user that accesses another network and related resources shall be subject to that networks acceptable use policy.

SECURITY

Security and web filtering/content management is a high priority. Northern chromebooks, computers, devices, networks and IT resources are protected by security and web filtering technologies, on and offsite. Any attempts to subvert or manipulate these technologies is a serious violation of the NA Disciplinary policy, and additional consequences may include loss of use, and suspension.

Users identifying a security problem on the school's system must notify the teacher in charge. A student is not to demonstrate the problem to other users. Attempts to log on to devices and systems as an IT Department staff member may result in restriction or suspension of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems device, network and resource usage may be denied access or use of them.

If a student or a student's parent/guardian has a NORTHERN network account, a non-NORTHERN network account, or any other account or program, which will enable direct or indirect access to a NORTHERN computer, any access to the NORTHERN computer system in violation of school policy and/or regulation may result in student discipline. Indirect access to a school computer shall mean using a non-school computer in a manner which results in the user gaining access to a school computer, including access to any and all information, records or other material contained or stored in a school computer.

NOTIFICATION

The Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources policy will be available to parents and students on the NORTHERN website at northernacademy.org. Questions? Email: contact@northernacademy.org

**Northern Academy is currently working to develop a restricted phone that does not allow Internet browsing (Northern Phone). Deployment is expected school year 2024/2025*

Exhibit A. Student Chromebook and IT Resources Access Agreement

For new high school students to receive a Chromebook, please read through and understand the **Student Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources policy**, and this **Student Chromebook and IT Resources Access Agreement** with your student, and acknowledge so when signing and submitting the **NAA - Parent Consent and Required Documents** electronic form.

Student Agrees to the following:

1. To use school devices and resources properly, as guided by the Student Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources policy, teacher instructions, and any additional directives from NORTHERN staff.
2. To take good care of the Chromebook, including not defacing it with stickers and labels, and store it in a backpack or a sleeve for protection. I understand that my parent/guardian may be assessed costs due to negligent or deliberate damage by me.
3. To return the equipment to NORTHERN upon request. I will also contact the NORTHERN technology department or my teacher if I have any problems with the laptop.
4. If the Chromebook is lost or stolen, I will notify the school immediately. If stolen, my parent/guardian will contact the police, obtain a police report, and submit a copy of this report to NORTHERN.
5. I will use NORTHERN's IT resources only for education and research purposes, and only as those purposes are consistent with the curriculum and educational objectives of NORTHERN.
6. I will use the Chromebook and IT resources in a responsible, ethical and legal manner at all times. I will not give out or share any logins, passwords or phone numbers.
7. I will be considerate of other electronic information users and their privacy and I will use polite and appropriate language at all times while accessing and using these resources.
8. I will not give out any personal information about myself or anyone else while using these resources unless approved by the instructor monitoring their use.
9. I will not knowingly degrade or disrupt IT resources, services or equipment, and I understand that such activity may be considered to be a crime and includes, for example, tampering with computer hardware and software, vandalizing or modifying data without permission, invoking computer viruses, attempting to gain access to restricted or unauthorized networks or network services.
10. I will report all security problems I identify while using these resources to my teacher or to the school staff who is monitoring my use of these resources.
11. I am aware that the inappropriate use of these resources can be a violation of local, state and federal laws and that I may be prosecuted for violating those laws.
12. I will not use other persons' information as my own, nor represent Artificial Intelligence (AI) content as my own. I will always give credit to the original creators of the information I find online. I will abide by all copyright laws and will seek assistance if a question arises.

By signing my name on this Student Chromebook and IT Resources Access Agreement form, I acknowledge I have read and understood this agreement, discussed it with my parent(s)/guardian, and will follow it.

Student Name (print) _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Exhibit B

Parent Consent for Chromebook Assignment and IT Resources Access

Students will not be allowed to use NORTHERN-issued Chromebooks and IT resources at school until:

A parent/guardian has acknowledged reading and understanding the **Student Chromebook and IT Resources Access Agreement** and the **Parent Consent for Chromebook Assignment and IT Resources Access** (this agreement) with their child, when signing and submitting the **NAA - Parent Consent and Required Documents** electronic form during enrollment.

As the parent or legal guardian of the student, I have read, reviewed and discussed the terms, conditions and responsibilities contained in NORTHERN’s **Student Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources** policy, and rules and regulations (accessible on NORTHERN’s web site) with him/her. Further, unless I advise the school to the contrary, in writing, this authorization shall continue henceforth for the current school year and shall be renewed annually. Having understood and acknowledged these stated conditions, I hereby:

I. *Basic Student Access to Networked Systems for Educational Use*

Grant permission for my son/daughter to access IT resources and services provided by Northern Academy for educational purposes. My son/daughter should not have any expectation of personal privacy in the use of computer systems. Should I wish to revoke this permission at some future date, I understand that I will be responsible for communicating such a decision, in writing, to the school principal.

Decline to permit my son/daughter to access IT resources and services as part of his/her educational program.

Permission for Son/Daughter to Use a NORTHERN-Issued Chromebook

Grant permission for my son/daughter to use a NORTHERN-issued Chromebook. My son/daughter may only use devices provided by NORTHERN. No personal computers should be brought to the school.

Do not wish to have my son/daughter use a NORTHERN-issued Chromebook.

I/We confirm that I/we have discussed with our son/daughter his/her responsibilities as a student as described in NORTHERN’s **Student Use of Electronics, Devices and Resources** policy, rules, and regulations and have discussed with my son/daughter that he/she is responsible for complying with the expectations set out within it. I understand failure to do so can result in discipline consequences. I/We further confirm that we have read and understand NORTHERN’s requirements for payment if my son/daughter damages, destroys, and/or fails to return the Chromebook upon departure from NORTHERN.

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

*** MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

- **The number of US teenagers who are online continuously is increasing at a dramatic pace, almost doubling from 2015 to 2018: 24% to 45%.**
Source: Anderson, M., & Jiang, J., 2018. PEW Research
- **The level of social media use on a given day is linked to a significant correlated increase in memory failure the next day**
Source: Sharifian, N., & Zahodne, L. B., 2019. Journal of Gerontology: Series B
- **The mere presence of your smartphone, even when it is turned off and face down, drains your attention**
Source: Ward, A. F., Duke, K., Gneezy, A., & Bos, M. W., 2017. Journal of the Association for Consumer Research
- **Media multitasking is significantly linked to later levels of attentional difficulties.**
Source: Baumgartner, S. E., van der Schuur, W. A., Lemmens, J. S., et al., 2017. Human Communication Research
- **Children under age 14 spend nearly twice as long with tech devices (3 hours and 18 minutes per day) as they do in conversation with their families (1 hour and 43 minutes per day).**
Source: Donnelly, L., 2019. The Telegraph
- **After nearly two decades in decline, high depressive symptoms for 13-18 year old teen girls rose by 65% between 2010-2017**
Source: Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N., 2018. Clinical Psychological Science
- **A longitudinal study of several thousand adolescents indicated that their level of social media usage was a significant predictor of their depression levels over the course of 4 years. For every increased hour spent using social media, teens show a 2% increase in depressive symptoms.**
Source: Boers, E., Afzali, M. H., Newton, N., & Conrod, P., 2019. JAMA Pediatrics
- **66% is the increase in the risk of suicide-related outcomes among teen girls who spend more than 5 hours a day (vs. 1 hour a day) on social media.**
Source: Twenge, J. M., Joiner, T. E., Rogers, M. L., & Martin, G. N., 2018. Clinical Psychological Science
- **A systematic review and meta-analysis (of 20 studies) showed strong, consistent evidence of an association between bedtime access to or use of electronic devices and reduced sleep quantity and quality, as well as increased daytime sleepiness.**
Source: Carter, B., Rees, P., & Hale, L., 2016. JAMA Pediatrics
- **The amount of time spent using social media is significantly correlated with later levels of alcohol use.** Research on several thousand teens demonstrated that while time spent on other forms of electronic media (including TV or video games) has comparatively little impact, the amount of time spent on social media is significantly linked to alcohol use 4 years later. Data indicates that social media has this unique effect through "social norming": repeatedly exposing teens to multiple images of their peers and role models drinking alcohol makes such behavior seem normal and acceptable, encouraging imitation.
Source: Boers, E., Afzali, M. H., & Conrod, P., 2020. Preventative Medicine

**** SEXUAL PREDATION / SAFETY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

- **Sharing nudes is becoming normalized**

- Approximately 40% of 13-17 year olds reported it was “normal for people my age to share nudes with each other.”
- 1 in 5 girls ages 13-17, and 1 in 10 boys ages 13-17, said they have shared their own nudes.

The above two points are from Thorn's 2019 SG-CSAM Report. The rest are from the 2020 report.

- **Problematic online interactions are very common**

Nearly half of participants (48%) said they had been made to feel uncomfortable, been bullied, or had a sexual interaction online.

Sexual interactions are common, including interactions with adults

1 in 3 participants reported having had an online sexual interaction. These included:

- being asked for a nude image or video
- being asked to go “on cam” with a nude or sexually explicit stream
- being sent a nude photo or video
- being sent sexually explicit messages

25% of 9-17 year olds reported having had a sexual interaction with someone they believed to be an adult

19% of 9-12 year olds reported having had a sexual interaction with someone they believed to be an adult

- **Girls are more at-risk 6**

- Over half (54%) of teen girls surveyed reported having had a potentially harmful online experience and 41% reported experience with an online sexual interaction. By comparison, 40% of teen boys reported having had a potentially harmful online experience and 31% reported experience with an online sexual interaction.
- Teen girls were nearly three times more likely to be solicited for a nude (28%) than teen boys (11%). Teen girls were also nearly two times more likely to have been sent sexual messages (32%) than teen boys (17%).
- Approximately 1 in 3 teenage girls (34%) reported having had an online sexual encounter with someone they believed to be over 18
- Approximately 1 in 6 (16%) 9-12 year old girls reported having had an online sexual encounter with someone they believed to be over 18

- **The most problematic platforms**

- The platforms with the highest number of survey participants reporting a potentially harmful online experience included Snapchat (26%), Instagram (26%), YouTube (19%), TikTok (18%), and Messenger (18%).
- Platforms where the most participants said they have had an online sexual interaction were Snapchat (16%), Instagram (16%), Messenger (11%), and Facebook (10%).
- Following these four, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts/Meet, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube each had 9% of participants say they had a sexual interaction on the platform.
- More than one-fifth of users (23% Snapchat, 22% Instagram, 21% WhatsApp) have reported experiencing sexually explicit interactions on one of these platforms.
- Nearly one-sixth of users have experienced an online sexual interaction with someone they believed to be an adult on Snapchat (15%) and Instagram (13%).

- About 1 in 10 users have experienced similar situations with adults on WhatsApp (11%), Facebook (10%), and Messenger (10%).
- Importantly there are a number of newer, less popular platforms with some of the highest rates of sexually explicit interactions among users.
- Users are more likely to experience sexual interactions on platforms such as Kik (23%), Telegram (21%), and Amino (20%) than on the average platform.

- **Many children are not disclosing harmful experiences**

- In theory, more than 2 in 3 minors (68%) said they would report a potentially harmful online experience offline to a caregiver or a peer.
- However, in practice, for those who've actually had a potentially harmful online experience, far fewer (41%) have sought help from the people in their lives.
- One in four 9-17 year olds (24%) who have had a potentially harmful online experience turned to "no one" for support.
- Of these minors, nearly two-thirds (62%) said they chose not to report because they felt it was not "a big deal" and one in four said they didn't because of anonymity concerns (24%) or embarrassment (23%).
- Only 37% of 9-17 year olds who had an online sexual interaction told a parent/caregiver/trusted adult/peer.