Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: XXX
Section: PROGRAMS
Title: K-12 TECHNOLOGY USE
Date Adopted: NEW

XXX K-12 TECHNOLOGY USE

I. Purpose

The Lower Merion School District is committed to the highest quality teaching and learning that is human-centered, inquiry-driven, and grounded in the belief that children learn best through active engagement, meaningful relationships, and the construction of understanding over time. Our Mission reflects this commitment:

> *The Lower Merion School District cultivates social and academic excellence and fosters well-being in all students by encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and kindness, preparing students to be contributing citizens and life-long learners in a rapidly changing world.*

At the heart of our schools are skilled, caring educators, who build relationships and belonging, design rich learning experiences, ask questions that deepen understanding, and guide students toward genuine curiosity and deeper understanding. This is the work no technology can replicate, and it must always remain the center of our educational practice.

Technology, at its best, can extend what human practice makes possible. It can connect students to primary and secondary sources they could never otherwise be accessible, make complex systems visible and interactive, enable authentic collaboration across distance, provide extension and differentiated learning as well as give learners tools to create, analyze, and express ideas in ways that go beyond what the mind or hand can do alone. In addition, technology can support teaching by providing timely insights into student learning through assessments, check-ins, and feedback that help educators identify gaps in understanding, monitor progress, and make informed instructional adjustments to better meet student needs. When technology serves these purposes, when it genuinely amplifies human curiosity, deepens understanding, and strengthens teaching and learning, it belongs in our classrooms and in our students' hands.

Accordingly, District staff and students shall use technology resources only when doing so serves a clear educational purpose and enhances teaching and learning in support of the District's mission, curriculum, instructional goals, or student access to learning. Technology shall support and extend, but never replace, the essential human relationships and experiences at the core of education and learning: direct instruction, face-to-face dialogue, physical books, hands-on inquiry, and student-to-student collaboration.

The District recognizes that families have different perspectives on student access to technology. The District believes it is imperative to maintain age-appropriate expectations, safeguards, supervision, and boundaries that support student well-being while maximizing the educational

value of technology resources.

Finally, nothing in this Policy limits a student's access to technology required to support their individual learning needs. Assistive technologies including, but not limited to, audiobooks, speech-to-text tools, adaptive programs, and communication supports, shall remain fully available to any student whose IEP, Section 504 Plan, or other documented need requires them.

II. Use of Technology, Generally

Technology resources shall be used only for educational purposes. Such use must directly support curriculum, teaching and learning, or other school-related responsibilities. In applying this standard:

- All use of technology resources shall be developmentally appropriate and in accordance with the Guiding Principles for Student Use (K-12 Progression) set forth below.
- Technology shall be used only when it serves a clear educational purpose and enhances teaching and learning. Therefore, teachers should consider using a technology resource when it supports the learning goal(s) such as by strengthening instruction, expanding access to learning, supporting differentiation, facilitating communication and collaboration, enabling creation, inquiry, and analysis, or providing timely feedback that improves student learning and informs instructional decision-making. Technology may also be used to support specialized educational plans, accommodations, modifications, and other services that promote inclusion and equitable access for all students.
- Technology shall be used intentionally and alongside non-digital methods so that it enhances, rather than replaces, essential learning experiences such as reading physical books, writing on paper, face-to-face discussion, hands-on activities, and interpersonal interaction.

As technology resources continue to evolve rapidly, the Superintendent and/or designee and the Board's Curriculum Committee shall review their use and implementation under this Policy at least annually and shall recommend any necessary revisions. Professional development for staff shall be substantive, ongoing, and required, and shall prepare staff to use technology effectively, developmentally appropriately, purposefully, and in accordance with District expectations.

All technology programs, platforms, devices, and applications shall be subject to rigorous review before approval and to periodic evaluation as a condition of continued use. The Superintendent and/or designee, curriculum team and teachers shall apply a clear and consistent standard to determine whether each instructional technology resource supports an educational purpose, is developmentally appropriate, and protects student data privacy and security. Technology resources that do not satisfy these standards shall not be approved or shall be discontinued.

III. Guiding Principles for Student Use (K-12 Progression)

The District prioritizes human interaction, effective teaching, and balanced learning experiences. Student use of Technology resources shall reflect a deliberate developmental progression that provides increasing access and responsibility as students mature. At every level, technology use shall serve a clear educational purpose, remain developmentally appropriate, aligned with curriculum and instructional goals, and be subject to appropriate supervision, safeguards, and expectations for responsible use.

Consistent with these principles:

- **Early Elementary (K-Grade 2):** Students in Kindergarten through Grade 2 shall not be issued individual devices. Technology shall not be used for routine classroom instruction in these grades. Any use shall be minimal, highly structured, and limited to specific educational purposes such as diagnostic testing or for teacher-directed, whole-class demonstration, visual display, or state testing preparation. This type of use must be infrequent and tied to specific learning objectives and standards.

- **Upper Elementary (Grades 3-4):** Students shall have supervised, teacher-directed access to technology resources. Devices shall remain in the classroom or another designated location and shall be used only as directed by the teacher. Teachers shall use technology only for limited, developmentally appropriate activities tied to standards, approved curricular resources and state testing preparation and mandates. Devices shall remain at school.

- **Lower Middle School (Grades 5-6):** Students shall have supervised, teacher-directed access to technology resources. Students will be assigned individuals devices; however, students shall not be required to use a computer at home. Parents/guardians may choose to allow their child to bring individual devices home for educational purposes, but are not required to do so. Devices shall not be used in school buildings in the morning before classes begin, between classes, at lunch, or during Intervention & Enrichment except for a specific instructional purpose under teacher supervision. Teachers shall use technology only for limited, developmentally appropriate activities tied to standards and approved curricular resources.

- **Upper Middle School (Grades 7-8):** Students shall have supervised, purposeful access to technology resources. Students will be assigned individual devices for instructional use during the school day and may take such devices to and from school. Devices shall be used only for approved instructional purposes and school-related work in accordance with teacher direction and District expectations. District-issued devices and technology resources shall support the transition to increased academic responsibility, including regular use for assigned work, organization, collaboration, and guided research. Their use shall help students build

responsible digital habits and increasing independence while remaining subject to clear limits, supervision, and expectations for appropriate use and digital citizenship aligned with curriculum, standards, and instructional goals.

- **High School (Grades 9-12):** Students shall be assigned individual devices to carry throughout the school day and to and from school. Devices may be used for approved instructional purposes and school-related work in accordance with District expectations, with increasing student responsibility for appropriate, effective, and independent use. District-issued devices and technology resources shall support sustained academic work across courses, including research, writing, analysis, creation, communication, collaboration, organization, and productivity. Their use shall also support preparation for college, career, and civic life by strengthening students' ability to manage complex tasks, use digital tools strategically, and engage responsibly and independently in technology-rich learning environments.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish Administrative Regulations governing the implementation of these expectations, including grade-level guidance regarding instructional use, supervision, device access, digital citizenship, and other requirements necessary to support this Policy.

IV. Safety, Monitoring, and Privacy

The District has an affirmative responsibility to protect students from inappropriate, harmful, and unlawful content and from unauthorized or unsafe access through the District's technology resources. In accordance with applicable law, including the Children's Internet Protection Act, and COPPA. The District shall implement and maintain filtering, blocking, and other technical safeguards to prevent such access to the greatest extent reasonably possible. The District shall establish and enforce safety restrictions, supervision practices, and usage controls for student and staff use of technology. The District shall also maintain a rigorous vetting process for approving teacher and staff requests to use additional technology resources, websites, applications, and similar tools for educational purposes. That process shall include review of curriculum alignment, educational necessity, age and developmental appropriateness, student data privacy, security, and legal compliance before any such resource is used with students.

Any user who compromises, disables, bypasses, or intentionally attempts to circumvent the district's filtering tools, safety restrictions, or security controls shall be subject to disciplinary action and any other appropriate consequences permitted by District policy and/or applicable law.

When students are issued or use District devices, those devices remain District property and all general technology rules always apply (on or off campus). Students are responsible for care and appropriate use. Devices may be monitored or accessed for technical or safety reasons.

District technology resources may be monitored, reviewed, and accessed as necessary to protect student safety, ensure appropriate use, determine the amount of time students use them and assess their educational value, maintain system security, and enforce District policy. Accordingly, users should not expect privacy when using District Technology Resources. Any such monitoring or access shall be conducted in accordance with applicable law and District procedures.

District Technology Resource security shall be designed and maintained to limit access to designated users, authorized purposes, and approved areas only, and to reduce the risk of students encountering inappropriate content, unsafe communications, or unauthorized access.

V. Acceptable Use & Responsible Digital Behavior

The District will provide age-appropriate ongoing instruction on digital citizenship, online safety, and responsible communication. This instruction shall address the risks and consequences of digital footprint, online activity, including social networking, chat rooms, electronic mail, instant messaging, cyberbullying, and copyright violations. Students shall not use District technology resources for social networking, chat rooms, non-assigned gaming sites, or other non-educational online interaction unless expressly authorized for a specific instructional purpose.

Students may use District technology resources only for educational purposes. All use must be responsible, ethical, and consistent with applicable law and District policies and procedures. Students remain responsible for their conduct when using District Technology Resources.

Students are expected to communicate respectfully and safely online, protect personal information (their own and others'), comply with copyright and academic integrity expectations, and refrain from cyberbullying or other harmful conduct.

VI. Prohibited Uses

Users may not use District technology resources to access or share harmful, illegal, or inappropriate content; harass, bully, or threaten others; disrupt school operations or network security; engage in non-educational or recreational use during school hours; or otherwise violate District policies, rules, or guidelines. Violations may result in loss of access, school discipline in accordance with Policy/AR 235 and applicable school rules, and any other appropriate consequences.

VII. Personal Technology

Personal Technology can create unnecessary distractions in the school environment. For the purposes of this Policy, Personal Technology means privately owned devices, such as phones, watches, tablets, and laptops, which are not issued by the District but may be used on District property in accordance with this Policy and the District's Administrative Regulations. All Personal

Technology must be turned off and remain in a backpack or locker during class periods. Teachers/staff may require students to store phones during class in a designated location in the teacher's classroom for that purpose.

- **Elementary (K-4) and Middle (5-8):** Personal Technology may not be used in school buildings during regular school hours. The District recognizes that students may carry devices for before- or after-school safety and caregiver communication. Accordingly, all Personal Technology must be turned off and kept in a backpack or locker throughout the school day. Use of Personal Technology during regular school hours may result in consequences under Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 235 (Students Rights and Responsibilities).

- **High School (9-12):** Personal Technology must be turned off and kept in a teacher-provided alternative during class periods. Violating this shall result in accountability under Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 235 (Students Rights and Responsibilities). The Superintendent and/or designee reserves the right to impose a full ban on cell phone use during the school day including during Lunch and Learn.

Personal Technology may not be used in any manner that violates state and/or federal law, Board policy, or school rules; interferes with or disrupts educational or extracurricular activities; or invades the privacy of others. Devices are not permitted to be used in restrooms, locker rooms, and any other area where individuals have a similar expectation of privacy. Nothing in this Policy prohibits use of Personal Technology to respond to or report an emergency.

VIII. Shared Responsibility

Supporting students in the safe, healthy, and productive use of technology is a shared responsibility of students, staff, families, school administration, the District, and the Board. Students shall use technology responsibly and for learning. Staff shall provide balanced, developmentally appropriate instruction and model appropriate use. Families shall reinforce safe and responsible technology habits at home and report concerns that may affect students or the school community.

The District shall communicate annually with families regarding technology expectations, digital citizenship, personal device rules, filtering practices, and recommended home technology habits. All annual updates are provided on the District's website for parent/guardian review. The District shall also provide guidance and support to staff and families in implementing this Policy, responding to misuse, and reinforcing developmentally appropriate, instructionally purposeful technology use. Families who need assistance establishing or enforcing technology limits at home are encouraged to contact school counselors or other appropriate school staff.

IX. Delegation of Responsibility for Implementation

The Superintendent shall promulgate Administrative Regulations describing how the Policy will be implemented to provide additional guidance to staff, students, and families.

Cross References:

- Board Policy and Admin. Reg. 114 (Individual Student Supports and Services)
- Board Policy and Admin. Reg. 235 (Student Rights and Responsibilities)