



Tolar Independent School District Model Health and Safety Guidelines for the Effective Integration of Digital Devices in Compliance with Texas Education Code Section 38.0231

Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of students in the Tolar Independent School District (TISD) as they integrate digital devices into their educational experience. It aims to align with the requirements of Texas Education Code Section 38.0231.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all students, teachers, and staff within TISD who use digital devices in school settings, including during instructional time, extracurricular activities, and any school-sponsored events.

1. Digital Device Usage Limits

1.1 Instructional Time:

- Digital devices should be used for instructional purposes only during designated times.
- Screen time should be limited to age-appropriate durations as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):
 - Grades K-2: Maximum of 1 hour per day.
 - Grades 3-5: Maximum of 2 hours per day.
 - Grades 6-8: Maximum of 3 hours per day.
 - Grades 9-12: Maximum of 4 hours per day.
- Teachers should incorporate non-screen-based activities into the curriculum to balance digital learning.

*** *Online testing may exceed maximum screentime***

1.2 Breaks:

- Students must take regular breaks from screen time:
- For every 30 minutes of screen use, a 5-minute break is recommended.
- These breaks should involve physical movement and eye rest.

2. Health and Safety Considerations

2.1 Ergonomics:

- Students should be encouraged to maintain an ergonomic posture when using digital devices (e.g., sitting upright, feet flat on the floor, screen at eye level).

2.2 Eye Health:

- The 20-20-20 rule should be implemented: Every 20 minutes, students should take a 20-second break and look at something 20 feet away to reduce eye strain.
- Classrooms should be adequately lit to reduce glare on screens.

2.3 Physical Activity:

- Campuses should incorporate movement into daily routines to counteract the sedentary nature of screen time.
- Encourage outdoor activities during recess and physical education periods.

3. Digital Citizenship and Safety

3.1 Online Behavior:

- Students should receive instruction on responsible digital citizenship, including the appropriate use of devices, respectful online communication, and awareness of cyberbullying.

3.2 Privacy and Data Security:

- Students should be educated on the importance of protecting personal information online.
- Use of digital devices should comply with district policies on data privacy and cybersecurity.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 Teacher Responsibility:

- Teachers are responsible for monitoring student screen time and ensuring compliance with these guidelines.
- Teachers should report any concerns regarding the overuse of digital devices to school administration.

4.2 Parental Involvement:

- Parents should be informed of these guidelines and encouraged to monitor and manage their child's screen time at home.
- The district will provide resources to help parents understand the impact of digital device usage on student health.

5. Professional Development

- 5.1 Training for Educators:

- Educators will receive ongoing training, EdPuzzle PD, on the effective and healthy integration of digital devices into the classroom.
- Training will cover ergonomics, eye health, digital citizenship, and strategies for balancing screen time with traditional teaching methods.

6. Review and Revision

- 6.1 Annual Review:

- This policy will be reviewed annually by a committee comprising educators, health professionals, parents, and administrators to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

- 6.2 Policy Updates:

- Changes to the policy will be communicated to all stakeholders and implemented at the beginning of the academic year.