

## LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF NURSING

### APPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

#### 1.0 PREAMBLE

In the practice setting, it is essential that nursing students remain focused on patient care. In the classroom or lab, a positive learning environment requires students to be fully engaged in learning activities.

The School of Nursing recognizes that – when used appropriately – the use of electronic devices may have a positive impact on:

- Learning
- Patient safety
- Quality of patient care
- Individual organization/efficiency

However, when used inappropriately, electronic devices may have a negative impact on these same areas and may present an unnecessary distraction. It is for this reason that the use of personal electronic devices is restricted in all Nursing courses.

In addition to this policy, students in the clinical setting will adhere to the organization's policies pertaining to appropriate use of electronic devices, in addition to those pertaining to privacy and confidentiality.

#### 2.0 DEFINITIONS

An “**electronic device**” includes any computer or wireless device that provides communication by email, telephone, text messaging, use of applications and internet browsing services. These devices include, but are not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, laptops, desktops, and tablets.

#### 3.0 POLICY

##### 3.1 Defining how Electronic Devices are used in the Classroom and/or Practice Setting:

When electronic device use is directly related to patient care or learning:

**a) In the classroom/lab:**

- i. Use of an electronic device to take notes on the current lesson is permitted in lecture and lab, subject to any conditions or limitations imposed by the teacher/ instructor.
- ii. Use of an electronic device to search for information directly related to the class topic is permitted. For example, if a teacher asks a question in class, the student searches the Internet, or uses an electronic textbook to find the answer.
- iii. Recording of any kind is strictly prohibited in all lectures and labs.

**b) In the Practice Setting:**

- i. Use of a computer provided by the practice setting to access policies and procedures, and electronic textbook/reference is permitted. For example, a student uses the online Parenteral Medication Manual to look up how to administer an IV medication.
- ii. Use of a personal electronic device in any patient care area is not permitted. Accessing electronic resources for information pertaining to patient care, or for documentation, is only permitted on hospital-provided electronic devices (e.g. computers, tablets).

**3.2 Use of Electronic Devices During Exams/Quizzes**

- i) Teachers will advise students whether any electronic devices are permitted during exams/quizzes. **a.** Students are not permitted to have access to cell phones during an exam/quiz.
- ii) If there are any special circumstances in which a student might need to have access to a cell phone during an exam (e.g. regarding a sick child or spouse at home), the student must discuss this issue with the teacher in advance of the exam.
- iii) If students are permitted to use calculators on an exam/quiz **a.** Students may only use a basic calculator.
- iv) Handheld electronic devices with the capability of communicating with each other (e.g. cell phones), or with the ability to send or save alphanumeric data (text) are NOT permitted.

### 3.3 Personal use of electronic devices

The personal use of electronic devices is NOT acceptable during classroom, lab or practice courses, except when on scheduled breaks off of the unit or other instances as authorized by the instructor. The personal use of electronic devices must not interfere with patient care, personal learning, the learning of other students, and must adhere to the Canadian Nurses Association (2017) Nursing Code of Ethics.

### 3.4 Confidentiality

- i. Electronic devices must not be used in any way (e.g. to photograph, videotape or audiotape people or documents) that could compromise the privacy confidentiality of a patient, peer, instructor, or staff member.
- ii. In addition to this policy outlining appropriate use of electronic devices in practice settings, students are also accountable to the policies of their practice setting(s) outlining guidelines and expectations related to privacy and confidentiality of patients and their health information.

### 3.5 Consequences of Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices

In the classroom, lab or practice setting:

- i. Inappropriate use of electronic devices (such as but not limited to use of technology resulting in a breach of privacy or confidentiality or cheating on a test or exam) will be considered in relation to the SON regulation outlining expectations related to professional and ethical student behaviour and the Student Code of Conduct- Academic Integrity.
- ii. If a student uses an electronic device in an inappropriate manner, the student's actions will be reviewed by the Clinical/Lab Instructor and/or Course Faculty, with potential collaboration with the Year Coordinator and Director as warranted. The Clinical/Lab Instructor and/or Course Faculty will document the incident on a Counselling Form which will be added to the student's file. For incidents occurring in the clinical practice setting, the practice setting will be notified and involved in imposing consequences and designing appropriate remediation, which may include dismissal from the practice setting.

### References

Canadian Nurses Association. (2017). *Code of ethics for registered nurses*.  
<https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/nursing-practice/nursing-ethics>

**Note: Adapted with permission from the University of British Columbia (UBC) 'Use of Electronic Devices' policy.**

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