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An Institutional Directive for Parents and Guardians from the Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS)

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ADVISORY GUIDELINES:
STUDENT MOBILE PHONE AND NEW AGE MEDIA MANAGEMENT

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1. Age-Appropriate Mobile Usage

- Regulate your child's use of digital devices according to their age and maturity.
- Before secondary education, limit devices to essential communication features such as voice calls and text messaging.
- Avoid providing unrestricted smartphones or internet-enabled devices at an early age.
- Use your child's correct legal age when creating accounts, device profiles, and applications.
- Enable age-appropriate safety filters, privacy settings, and parental controls on all devices and applications.

2. Regulation of Screen Time

- Establish reasonable daily limits on screen time and overall device use.
- Balance digital engagement with physical activity, sleep, family interaction, emotional well-being, and academic responsibilities.
- Designate device-free periods during study hours, meal times, family interactions, and before bedtime.
- Encourage healthy offline activities and responsible technology use.
- Monitor screen habits regularly to prevent excessive digital dependency.

3. Supervision of Social Media Access

- Comply with the minimum age requirements prescribed by social media and digital platforms.
- Do not permit children to create or operate accounts before attaining the legally or platform-prescribed age.
- Actively supervise your child's online activities and remain aware of the devices, applications, and platforms being used.
- Retain appropriate access to device passwords and account credentials, where necessary, to safeguard the child's well-being.
- Configure all social media accounts and digital profiles with the highest available privacy and safety settings.
- Restrict online visibility and interactions to known and trusted individuals.

4. Prevention of Cyberbullying and Online Misconduct

- Reinforce that standards of respectful behaviour, discipline, and accountability apply equally in both physical and digital environments.
- Educate children that cyberbullying, harassment, intimidation, defamation, impersonation, and the circulation of offensive content are unacceptable and may attract disciplinary and legal consequences.

- Prohibit the unauthorised recording, photographing, sharing, or publication of images, videos, audio recordings, or digital content involving students, staff members, or institutional activities without proper consent.
- Encourage children to report cyberbullying, online threats, coercion, exclusion, or other inappropriate digital interactions at the earliest opportunity.
- Maintain open communication so that children feel safe seeking guidance without the immediate fear of punitive confiscation of devices.

5. Restrictions During Study Hours, Night Hours, and Family Time

- Keep communication and entertainment devices away during study, homework, and examination preparation hours.
- Ensure devices remain switched off, on silent mode, or stored outside the immediate study environment to minimise distractions.
- Collect or store digital devices in a common charging area, or place them under parental supervision at least one hour before bedtime.
- Discourage children from carrying internet-enabled devices into bedrooms during sleeping hours.
- Maintain device-free environments during meals and important family interactions to strengthen communication, attentiveness, and healthy family habits.

6. Digital Gaming, Media and Harmful Content Awareness

- Monitor the games, applications, and online platforms accessed by your child.
- Ensure that movies, entertainment shows, and theatre outings are strictly age-appropriate, refraining from exposing children to content containing graphic violence, explicit sexual material, or age ratings (such as PG-13, R, or equivalent) unsuitable for the child's maturity level.
- Discourage access to gambling-related applications, real-money gaming platforms, and applications involving excessive in-app purchases or addictive usage patterns.
- Use parental controls, content filters, and device-level safety settings to restrict exposure to pornography, graphic violence, extremist material, and other age-inappropriate content.
- Remain alert to signs of unhealthy digital dependency, including excessive irritability, social withdrawal, sleep disruption, or emotional distress associated with gaming or prolonged device usage.
- Intervene at an early stage through guidance, balanced routines, and constructive engagement.

7. Digital Responsibility and Data Protection

- Educate your child about the long-term consequences of their digital footprint and the importance of responsible online conduct.
- Instruct students never to share personal information, passwords, OTPs, financial details, live locations, photographs, or institutional information with unknown persons or on public platforms.
- Encourage respectful and responsible communication across all digital platforms.
- Reinforce the importance of privacy, cybersecurity awareness, and safe online practices at all times.

8. Institutional Restrictions on Smartphone Usage

- Comply with the institution's policies regarding the possession and use of smartphones and internet-enabled devices on campus.
- Where a communication device is necessary for a student's safety during travel to and from school, provide only a basic feature phone restricted to voice calls and text messaging.
- Do not provide unrestricted smartphones featuring independent mobile data, advanced gaming, or unmonitored social media access for use on school premises.

8.1 Day Scholar Students

- Ensure that any permitted communication device is surrendered to the designated school authority immediately upon arrival.
- Cooperate with the institution in securely storing the device during school hours.
- Ensure the device is collected only upon school dismissal.

8.2 Use During School Hours

- Keep all permitted devices switched off and securely stored throughout instructional hours.
- Do not permit the use or display of any device without explicit authorisation from the school leadership.

8.3 Non-Compliance

- Be aware that unauthorised possession, visibility, or use of prohibited or unsurrendered devices may result in immediate confiscation and disciplinary action in accordance with institutional rules.

9. Guidelines for Boarding and Hostel Students

- Adhere to the communication schedules and hostel regulations prescribed by the institution.
- Cooperate fully with hostel wardens and school authorities in implementing device restrictions, curfews, and study-hour protocols.
- Do not provide unauthorised or concealed secondary devices intended to bypass institutional supervision or hostel regulations.
- Support hostel policies that promote disciplined study habits, healthy routines, and student well-being.

10. Cyber Safety and Legal Awareness

- Educate children about applicable cyber laws and the legal consequences of identity theft, cyberbullying, online harassment, defamation, hacking, impersonation, circulation of explicit content, and unauthorised sharing of digital material.
- Do not permit students to link personal or family debit cards, credit cards, digital wallets, or payment applications to their devices without parental supervision.

- Reinforce basic cyber hygiene by avoiding suspicious links, unverified downloads, fraudulent messages, unknown online contacts, and unsafe digital interactions.
- Encourage children to report suspicious online activities or cyber threats immediately.

11. Child Protection and Online Exploitation Awareness

- Educate children about online safety and the risks of interacting with unknown individuals on digital platforms, gaming applications, and social media.
- Instruct students not to share personal photographs, videos, or sensitive information with strangers or unverified contacts.
- Create age-appropriate awareness regarding online grooming, manipulation, coercion, and other forms of online exploitation.
- Report any suspected online exploitation, harassment, or inappropriate contact to the appropriate authorities without delay.
- Inform the institution promptly to enable timely protective measures and appropriate intervention.

12. Institutional and Parental Cooperation

- Support and consistently uphold the institution's policies on digital conduct, student discipline, and responsible technology use.
- Maintain regular communication with school authorities regarding cyberbullying, harmful digital trends, online threats, or behavioural concerns affecting student safety and well-being.
- Promptly inform the institution of any significant digital safety concerns requiring institutional attention.
- Participate in seminars, workshops, and awareness programmes organised by the institution, the IT Department, or specialised technical cells (such as TCRC) to strengthen digital monitoring and device management practices.
- Work collaboratively with the institution to promote a safe, disciplined, and responsible digital environment.

13. School Responsibility Towards Digital Awareness and Protection

The Sambhota Tibetan Schools Society (STSS) is committed to promoting the constructive, safe, and ethical use of technology through the following initiatives:

Integrated Digital Literacy Curriculum

- Integrate age-appropriate digital literacy into the academic curriculum.
- Educate students on cyber hygiene, digital footprints, data privacy, and the critical evaluation of online content.

Proactive Prevention and Awareness Programmes

- Organise regular workshops, seminars, and interactive awareness programmes in coordination with the IT Department and specialised technical cells (such as TCRC).

- Educate students on cyberbullying, online grooming, financial fraud, gaming addiction, and the responsible use of social media.

Safe Reporting Ecosystem

- Maintain a confidential, supportive, and non-punitive environment for reporting cyberbullying, online harassment, or other digital safety concerns.
- Encourage students to seek assistance without the immediate fear of device confiscation or academic penalisation.

Capacity Building for Educators

- Provide periodic training to school leaders, counsellors, and teaching staff.
- Strengthen the ability of educators to identify early signs of digital distress, cyberbullying, or unhealthy technology dependency.
- Ensure timely institutional guidance, counselling, and emotional support for students.

14. Ethical Engagement with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emerging Technologies

- Guide children in the responsible and ethical use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies for educational purposes.
- Ensure that AI tools are used to support learning and not to facilitate academic dishonesty in assignments, projects, or assessments.
- Encourage students to critically evaluate and verify AI-generated information before relying on it.
- Do not permit the sharing of personal, confidential, or institutional information on AI platforms.
- Follow any additional institutional guidelines issued regarding the use of AI and emerging technologies.

15. Conclusion

- Recognise that protecting children in the digital environment requires a shared responsibility between the institution and families.
- Support healthy technology boundaries, responsible online behaviour, and balanced digital habits at home.
- Reinforce the institution's efforts to promote academic focus, physical health, emotional well-being, and digital safety.
- Continue working in partnership with the school to foster a safe, disciplined, and digitally responsible learning environment.