



#167-21

**Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #167-21**

DATE: June 25, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Digital Devices in the Classroom: Health and Safety Guidelines**

In January 2020, Virginia legislators passed House Bill 817 requiring the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), in collaboration with the Department of Health and medical professional societies, to develop health and safety guidelines related to the use of digital devices in the classroom.

[HB 817](#) (Patrick A. Hope) - Public schools; use of digital devices.

That the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Health and medical professional societies, shall develop and distribute for use by local school boards health and safety best practice guidelines for the effective integration of digital devices in public schools no later than the 2021-2022 school year. The guidelines shall be based on peer-reviewed, independently funded studies and shall at a minimum address digital device use for different age ranges and developmental levels, the amount of time spent on digital devices in the classroom, appropriate break frequency from the use of digital devices, physical positioning of digital devices in the classroom, the use of digital devices for homework, and recommended teacher training to ensure best practice implementation.

The VDOE convened a Digital Devices in the Classroom Workgroup to develop guidelines. The guidelines address digital device use for different age ranges and developmental levels, the amount of time spent on digital devices in the classroom and for homework, appropriate

break frequency from the use of digital devices, physical positioning of digital devices in the classroom, and recommended training to ensure best practices.

The guidelines will include three major focus areas to help support teaching and learning within these online models and include recommended training for school personnel.

- Devices and use of in the PreK-12 classroom
- Screen time, frequency and breaks
- Ergonomics and posture

The guidelines and infographic are posted on the [VDOE Virtual Teaching and Learning website](#). School divisions are encouraged to share this information with school personnel and post the information widely through web portals, learning management systems, and social media platforms. These guidelines may be shared with students and parents.

For more information

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Reginald Fox at (804) 371-5663 or Reginald.Fox@doe.virginia.gov; or Dr. Meg Foley at (804) 786-0877 or Meg.Foley@doe.virginia.gov.

JFL/MF/ce