



Halifax

Regional Centre for Education

John MacNeil Elementary School

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Jan Gillespie – Principal

Neil Finley - Vice Principal

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope this letter finds you well. As you may be aware, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has recently announced a Provincial Directive on Cell Phones in Schools. This directive aims to create a learning environment free from unnecessary distractions, ensuring that our students can focus, feel safe, and succeed academically.

Starting in September 2024, the following cell phone policy will be implemented at our school:

1. **During Instructional Time:**

- All students must have their personal cell phones turned off and stored out of sight.

2. **Grades PP-5:**

- Students in Grades PP- 5 will turn off and store their cell phones for the entire school day, including non-instructional times. Our school does not have lockers for PP- 5 so we highly recommended cell phones to stay at home, as the school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

3. **Exceptions:**

- Exceptions may be made for individual students' needs (e.g., medical reasons or specific abilities) in consultation with the Student Planning Team, which includes parents/caregivers. These exceptions must have documentation from the appropriate source, ie: family doctor, in order for it to occur.

To ensure clarity and consistency, the school administration and staff will collaborate with the School Advisory Council (SAC) to review and implement this policy effectively. Once our school's specific implementation plan is developed, it will be communicated to all students, parents, and guardians to ensure that everyone is well-informed about what to expect for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year.

Consequences for Students who refuse to turn their phones off during instructional times:

- The first time a student is found using their device when not permitted, they will be reminded and asked to turn it off and put it away.
- The second time, the student will be asked to bring the phone to the office and they can pick it up at the end of the day. Their parent or guardian will be notified.
- Repeated incidents will result in the device being held until a parent or guardian meets with the Principal to retrieve the device.

Additional Points:

- Cell phones are never permitted in washrooms and change rooms.
- Cell phones should never be used to take pictures or videos of anyone, at any point, during the school day
- Parents and Guardians should call the school office to pass along important messages to students.

We believe that by implementing this policy, we can minimize distractions, reduce anxiety and bullying, and create a safer and more conducive learning environment. We appreciate your support and partnership in this matter and look forward to a successful school year.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

John MacNeil Administration and JMES School Advisory Council