



Principal: Mark MacPhee

GORSEBROOK JUNIOR HIGH

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Vice Principal: Patricia Fee

School Counsellor : Mary Mallon

Dear Parents & Guardians,

We have a new directive this year regarding cell phones/personal mobile devices and their use in school. 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 recognizes the importance of maintaining a learning environment that is free from unnecessary distractions so that students can focus, feel safe and be successful in school.

Last spring, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development consulted with school advisory councils and ministerial advisory councils, as well as the Public-School Administrators Association of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union on the use of cellphones and personal mobile devices in schools. The team also visited schools, spoke directly with principals and teachers and consulted with IWK public health experts. Responses overwhelmingly supported clear, consistent restrictions on cell phone and personal technology device use throughout the school day. We owe it to our students to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom.

As a school, we welcome this announcement as we know from experience that cell phones and other personal technological devices are often a source of distraction. They are also known to contribute to feelings of anxiety, can be used to bully and negatively impact students' overall feelings of well-being.

Cell Phones and any other personal mobile devices with similar functionality (portable gaming consoles, MP3 players, earbuds connected to a device, iPods, etc) are included in the directive. If students decide to bring these devices to school, students accept all responsibility. The school is not responsible for loss or damage to any cell phones or other personal mobile devices.

What does this mean for students at our school next year?

- **For Grades 7-9, cell phones and personal mobile devices (air pods, headphones and smart devices) are to be turned off, and stored in lockers while students are inside the building. This includes all instructional time and lunch time. Students who stay at school for lunch may use their phones once we finished eating.**
- All students are provided a lock for their locker. Once phones are placed in the locker students are required to lock their locker. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen phones.

- Exceptions to these requirements will be to accommodate the documented individual medical condition for those students who use their phone to monitor blood sugar levels for diabetes.
- If students require access to technology in a classroom the teacher will make a Chromebook available.
- Students are not permitted to leave class to go to their locker to check or retrieve their phone.
- **At no time are cell phones permitted in washrooms and change rooms**
- Parents and Guardians are welcome to call the office 902 421 6777 option 0 to pass along emergency messages, if necessary, during the day. If a student needs to make a call home during the day we will make the office phone available to them.

We realize this is a change for students and we will spend time on the first two days educating students and answering questions about what is or isn't allowed so they have a clear understanding of our expectations of them.

Starting Monday Sept 9th

What happens if a student does not follow these expectations?

Incident #	Consequence
1	The first time a student is found using their device (s) when not permitted, they'll be referred to the office and the device will be left in a secure location in our office for the day. Their parent or guardian will be notified.
2	The second time a student is found using their device (s) when not permitted, they'll be referred to the office and the device will be left in a secure location in our office until a parent can come to the school to retrieve it.
3	The third time a student is found using their device (s) when not permitted, the student will be subject to an out of school suspension under the provincial code of conduct.
Continued misuse of cell phone or personal mobile device on school property will result in the further application of the Provincial Code of Conduct.	

Our staff will also model these expectations by only using personal cell phones when necessary for work purposes. We are looking forward to partnering with parents and guardians to successfully implement this change in expectations because we believe strongly that it is in everyone's best interest.

Thank you for your support.

Mark MacPhee, Principal
 Patricia Fee, Vice-Principal