

Good evening West Bedford High School families,

As you are aware, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development has recently announced a **Provincial Directive on Cell Phones in School**. 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.

As a school, we welcome this announcement as we know from experience that cell phones and other related 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.

What does this mean for students this year?

- During class/instructional time cell phones must be turned off and stored out of sight. Students are also encouraged to use their lockers to store cell phones.
- Grade 10 and 11 students who are on FIT (flex) period may use their cell phones in the library, cafeteria, mezzanine or outside. All other areas are cell phone free environments. Grade 7-9 students do not have any flex periods and are not permitted on their phones during instructional time, whether inside the classroom or not.
- During instructional time, cell phones cannot be used in the hallways or stairwells.
- All students are permitted to use their cell phones during non-instructional times (before school, lunch, and after school). There is no time between classes at WBH thus students are not permitted on phones in the hallways when moving to class.
- **At no time during the school day are cell phones permitted in washrooms and change rooms.**
- There may be school based learning activities where cell phones will be used. These will be planned and approved by the office.
- Student council will also have permission, at times, to create videos for school purposes. This again will be arranged by the student council teacher leader. Students will have badges that identify that they have permission to film using cell phones.
- Social media use. Students at no time or in any location of the building have permission to film other students, make Tik Tok's, etc.
- Exceptions may be made to address students' medical needs within their medical plan (ex: diabetic students), when determined in consultation with the Student Planning Team, which includes Parents / caregivers.

Communication to Families

- Letter of Expectation sent home to students and families prior to the start of school.
- All students learn about expectations during orientation workshops or assemblies on September 5th or 6th and into the next week.
- Teachers review the expectations for cell phones at the beginning of every class on September 5th & 6th.
- Signage will be posted throughout the building

Response to Student Cell Phone Use

- Cell phone use addressed by the teacher and the student is immediately referred to the office.
- Teacher contacts the office and completes an incident tracking form (PowerSchool). The teacher will not ask or take the phone. Students are expected to go directly to the office and wait to see an administrator.
- Discipline will be addressed in a progressive manner with consequences that align with the Provincial Code of Conduct.

First Offense: Meet with the student, review expectations and home will be contacted.

Second Offense: Suspend from school.

Repeated Offenses: Suspension, parent meeting and individual cell phone plan.

Classroom Technology

Although cell phones and other personal devices are not necessary for academic success, we have made a commitment to provide up-to-date technology for use in class. We have a 1-1 ratio for students to chromebooks. Assistive technology to support reading, writing and translating may be installed to support those who require it.

Communicating with your child during the school day

We understand that a quick text or call to your child's phone is an efficient and easy way to communicate during the school day. With our school phone system, we can get an urgent or emergency message to your child if you contact the main office at 902-405-0442 ext. 0

As a reminder, all students have access to phones at lunch and they can be reached.

We do recognize that cell phones add considerable convenience to our day-to-day lives. However, in the school setting we have seen that pervasive use can lead to distractions that disrupt the learning environment, as well as impact student success. Our staff will continue to educate and model appropriate, responsible use as we understand that this will be a significant adjustment. We are looking forward to partnering with parents and guardians to successfully implement this change.

Thank you for your support.