

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Parents and Guardians,

In April of this year, the provincial government updated PPM 128, better known as the provincial Code of Conduct. Including a focus on the use of cellphones and other personal mobile devices in schools, this updated PPM supports student achievement and well-being by keeping students focused on their learning through the removal of distractions and the promotion of positive mental health.

As part of the new DDSB multi-year strategic plan, these changes align with our focus on meaningful learning, creating connections, and ensuring well-being within our schools and communities. Focusing on removing distractions is a key aspect of these changes and will ensure that student engagement remains as a central focus of classroom and school experiences.

What does this mean for students and parents/guardians?

Elementary Schools

To maintain a focused and engaging learning environment, we are asking students in kindergarten to Grade 8 to refrain from using their personal mobile devices, such as a cellphone or tablet, during the school day. During the school day, devices must be:

- turned off or set to silent mode;
- stored out of view

Wearables such as smart watches must be put into the equivalent of 'airplane mode' during the school day.

Students may use their personal mobile devices in school if:

- a school administrator gives permission (for example, for health and medical purposes, to support special education needs, as part of an approved accommodation plan or health and safety plan, or for other Human Rights Code-related needs or circumstances); or,
- a teacher gives permission to use them as part of learning during instructional time.

Secondary Schools

To maintain a focused and engaging learning environment, we are asking students in Grade 9 to 12 to refrain from using their personal mobile devices, such as a cellphone or tablet, during instructional time. During instructional time, devices must be:

- turned off or set to silent mode
- stored out of view

Wearables such as smart watches must be put into the equivalent of 'airplane mode' during instructional time.

Students may use their personal mobile devices during instructional time if:

- a school administrator gives permission (for example, for health and medical purposes, to support special education needs, as part of an approved accommodation plan or health and safety plan, or for other Human Rights Code-related needs or circumstances); or,
- a teacher gives permission to use them as part of learning.

Students may use their personal mobile devices during non-instructional times such as lunch or spares.

All Schools

Students are responsible for their personal mobile device and how they use it.

As part of this communication, you will see a draft code of conduct which outlines expectations and sets standards of behaviour for everyone within our schools and communities. For situations that arise where the use of personal mobile devices is used inappropriately, school staff may:

- require a student to hand in their personal mobile device;
- store the mobile device in a safe place for the rest of the day.

We look forward to your support in implementing this new policy beginning September 3rd to help students focus on learning, achievement, and well-being by removing distractions and promoting mental health.

We appreciate your attention to this matter, and hope that your student(s) have a successful year ahead.