

Safe and Healthy Schools Update

BOARD OF EDUCATION PUBLIC BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 27, 2024

January 26th Premier's Announcement



The announcement includes three concrete actions to keep kids and young adults safe:

1. **Restricting** the use of cellphones in schools;
2. Launching services to remove images from the internet and pursue predators; and
3. Legislation to hold social media companies accountable for the harm they have caused.

Phone Use (McCreary AHS 2023)



Most students (98%) in this school district had a phone or tablet, and used it for a variety of activities.

What students used phone/tablet for on their last school day	
Gambling	3%
Playing/watching esports	16%
Gaming other than esports	25%
Sexting	3%
Watching porn	6%
Connecting with family and friends	71%
Scrolling through social media	77%
None of these	8%

Alignment with NVSD Initiatives



- This year we have partnered with the Exploitation Education Institute to work with grade 7, 8 and 9 students on the topics of Cybersafety, Exploitation and Consent
- Grade 6 classrooms will be working with Children of the Street and their *Safer Space* presentation to look at sexploitation, sextortion, intimate image sharing, etc.
- Students in grades 10-12 all received this education last year

Student Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement



Student use of personally-owned devices in the classroom will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher who may prohibit, restrict or regulate use of personally-owned devices.*

* Unless accommodated within a student's Individualized Education Plan.

Elementary Language Examples



Cell Phones, Electronics and Personal Property

- Students may not use cell phones, or electronic devices during the school day without the permission of a supervising staff member.
 - Cell phones should remain secured in student backpacks during the school day.
- All communication with parents/guardians or caregivers should take place at the office.
- Taking photos without teacher supervision is not permitted.

It is becoming increasingly common for students to be carrying cell phones and other electronics to school. We recognize that for some families a phone is important for communication between students and parents or caregivers before and after school.

However, we also find that cell phones can be a source of classroom disruption and a safety concern. We ask that parents please note the following:

Cell phones at school must be silenced or turned off during the instructional day. Students may not use cell phones in classrooms, hallways, washrooms or on the playground during the school day, without permission from a school staff member.

Secondary Language Examples



The use of mobile phones during class time will be prohibited, unless explicitly provided for by the classroom teacher.

Electronic devices (cellphones, iPads, laptops) CAN BE USED in class to help meet the course learning outcomes. Explicit teacher permission must be obtained prior to use.

The following uses of a cell phone are considered appropriate, and ARE permitted:

- Teacher-directed activities
- Accessing the School app for planning and recording homework at a designated time

When arriving in class, students are expected to put their cell phone away in a place where it will not be a distraction to themselves or to others. If a student is using their phone after having been asked to put it away by the teacher, they may be directed to the administration for further disciplinary action, which may include loss of cell phone privileges while at school.



Proposed Approach – Implementation



Mechanism - Will likely amend Provincial Standards for Codes of Conduct Order

- Already an established requirement that is reviewed annually
- Applies to all schools within a district
- Requires districts to update their district and school codes of conduct

Implementation Guide - to be developed by end of March

- Additional guidance on how to approach accessibility, accommodation, medical/mental health needs and student equity
- Information on use for instructional purposes, critical thinking and digital literacy
- Resources on digital literacy and online safety

Proposed Approach - Provincial Direction

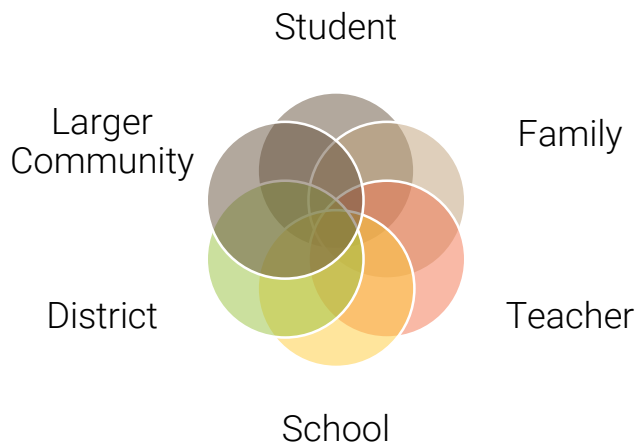


Require all districts to have procedures to restrict cell phone use in classrooms for the 2024/2025 school year.

Ministry Expectations:

- All districts have a procedure in place in each school that restricts cell phone use during instructional time
- Stronger restrictions in Elementary and Middle schools
- Exemptions for health and safety, accessibility, educational use
- Districts to work with unions, community/parent groups, and First Nations to develop/update procedure
- Districts will report back to confirm procedures in place by August 15th

Moving Forward



Parental Monitoring (AHS 2023)



Students were asked how much they felt their parents monitored what they were doing in their free time and online in the past 30 days.

How much students felt their parents knew what they were doing ...			
	Never/ rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time/ always
With their free time	10%	14%	76%
Online	40%	22%	39%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Next Steps



- Allow the provincial consultation process to unfold
- Ensure that NVSD actions are well-informed and aligned with the broader guidelines
- As we move through this consultation period, guidance will be provided to all schools, either as part of the code of conduct review process, or through specific direction from the school district
- Trial of proposed language this spring
- Our goal is to ensure a thoughtful and unified approach to implementing these new restrictions.