



# École Secondaire Notre Dame High School

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## Cell Phone Policy

Dear Parents/Guardians:

### **Re: Cell Phone/Smartwatch expectations and changes**

At École Secondaire Notre Dame High School we recognize that cell phones / Smartwatches (mobile devices) have become a big part of people's lives and they make student / parent communication much easier. Over the past several years, we have noticed that these devices have become a huge distraction in class. A continued focus for us is to ensure the very best climate for learning for all students. To support this goal, we have made the decision to institute a school wide cell phone use policy regarding the use of mobile devices during class time because of the ongoing negative effect on student learning.

This decision was not made lightly. We have done significant research into the topic to understand the issues. A recent survey (*link is at the end of this letter*) noted that back in 2001 no schools banned mobile phones. By 2007, this had risen to 50% and by 2012 some 90% of schools either did not allow mobile phones on school premises or required them to be handed in at the beginning of the day. Your child will have access to technology for their education as we have devices (Chromebooks, iPads etc) or will be able to access their mobile device for academic purposes during instructional time with their teachers permission. This is outlined in the policies on the next page. Our fellow high school, St. Joseph's, as well as St. Patrick's Community School and École Mother Teresa Catholic School have also recently made similar changes to their mobile phones policy.

Our experience at École Secondaire Notre Dame High School is that these mobile devices are highly distracting, are being used inappropriately, and also create confrontational situations. The situation is further complicated by a number of students and parents seeing it as their "right" to have constant use of a device. Please note that in the case of any special needs or family emergencies, we have a landline (403-342-4800) that is answered from 8:00am - 4:00 pm.



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Despite our efforts to help students facilitate appropriate mobile device use, including digital citizenship lessons and working through various solutions, these devices continue to cause significant distraction to the point where their presence has an addictive quality.

Students will be informed at the start of this school year of our new expectations. The basic principles are listed below, and our school website will be updated to reflect the new procedure.

### Policy

1. Mobile devices should be 'off and away' during all class times in learning communities (this would include masses, celebrations and presentations). Each classroom will be equipped with a spot for students to place their cell phones. For academic purposes, the teacher may require the students to use their mobile devices. This use of a mobile device and the time frame, will be clearly communicated by the teacher. If any mobile device is seen or heard in class, during non-designated times, the student will be asked to take their mobile device to the office.
2. Delivered devices will be returned at the end of the students school day in the first and second instances. Should there be a third occurrence, a call will be made home requiring a parent/guardian to collect the student's device.
3. Students are still able to use their devices prior to school, during lunch, during breaks and after school. We would appreciate if you would contact your child during these times.

Ultimately, school is a microcosm of the wider society. Just as most workplaces have mobile phone policies in place to ensure minimal distractions during work hours, so it is in the classroom. Knowing that certain behaviour is acceptable in some places, but not in others is at the crux of how young people can better use mobile devices' and develop socially responsible behaviours. Moderation is key to enjoying the advantages that we



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have here in Canada.

Practicing moderation is a good discipline. In fact, self-control is one of the qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the life of a believer (Galatians 5:22-23). When we are not living in moderation-when we lack self-control in a certain area of our lives-it can indicate that we're not allowing God fully into that area. Let's work together to help the students find that all things should be practiced in moderation and that includes the use of mobile devices.

Thank you for your support as we continue to work towards providing a safe learning environment where quality instruction and learning occurs.

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***USEFUL LINKS:** "High levels of smartphone use by teens often have a detrimental effect on achievement, because teen phone use is dominated by entertainment, not learning, applications," *Wired Child: Reclaiming Childhood in a Digital Age**

<http://www.scarymommy.com/how-cell-phones-affect-kids-in-school/>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/04/do-smartphones-have-a-place-in-the-classroom/480231/>

<http://www.charlton.uk.com/news/?pid=3&nid=2&storyid=117>

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/691462>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/may/16/schools-mobile-phones-academic-results>

<http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1350.pdf>  
(school mobile device ban data found on page 25)