

## **New School Cell Phone Policy:**

École Secondaire Highwood High School will have a 'No Cell Phone' in class policy next year. Research is clear that cell phones distract from learning and create other issues we constantly deal with at the school level including gaming, inappropriate uses, bullying, theft, illegal activity, etc. We have highlighted some of these points below.

Beginning in the Fall of 2023, cell phones and smart devices must be kept in lockers or not brought to school at all. If there is a need to access a student device for surveys or other large-scale access to online resources (such as Physical Education module selection), we will communicate this ahead of time. Students can also access Chromebooks to complete these activities. Students who do keep their cell phones in their lockers will be able to access them before and after school, during breaks, and at lunchtime. Students should not be visiting their lockers otherwise during class time.

If you need to get a hold of your child, please know they only get to look at their phones during the above-mentioned times. During class time, please contact the office and we will gladly notify them.

We will go over this with students on the first day of classes, however it is suggested that you have a conversation with your child prior to the start of school. Keeping phones in pockets or back packs will not be allowed. Only in their locker or at home.

Students who use their phones outside of these times could be subject to leaving their phone in the office for the day, checking their phones in each day at the office, or may be disallowed to bring them into the building.

### **Distraction**

- When cell phones are in student's hands for most of the day, notifications constantly go off causing a student to look down without even realizing. This causes inadvertent distractions and takes away from what's presently occurring in the classroom.

### **Falling Grades**

- When cell phones are in student's hands for most of the day, they cannot complete assigned work and grades drop dramatically. In general, when students look down at their phones it usually takes about 5 minutes for them to re-focus on what they were doing before. Information is not being stored in their brains so work can't be done.

### **Motivation to Learn**

- Many times, when a student doesn't understand something in class, or just doesn't want to participate, they'll go to their phone instead of asking for help or explanation.

### **Disrespectful Tone**

- When a teacher is teaching a lesson, while many are on their phones, few are trying to learn. The students on their phones are distracting one another. This is disrespectful to the learning environment. Students who are distracted and not learning are quick to blame the teacher for their own lack of understanding and failure.

## **Cheating**

- Some students are distracted and don't pay attention, so when it comes to writing an assessment, they cannot provide the answers, leading some to use their cell phone to cheat. We have also seen an increase in the use of ChatGPT, more information about ChatGPT can be found here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ChatGPT>

## **Cyber bullying**

- With the number of social media platforms available and the number of students using these apps, there is ample opportunity for students to utilize these tools in a threatening, harassing, and in a bullying manner. We continue to experience this throughout the school day and within classrooms.

## **Social life**

- Some students exhibit addictive behaviours towards cell phone use; they are constantly distracted by notifications regarding social media. Social interaction shouldn't be solely through a screen and via text. Many times, these habits result in depression and anxiety.

## **Other Statistics**

- 92% of students use smartphones to text during class
- 89% of students report cases of being cyber bullied via their phone in school
- 73% of students report using their phone in class for non-educational purposes
- 68% of students browse or receive notifications of social media in the classroom
- 35% of students agree that they use their smartphones to cheat in tests and exams
- 11% of students report that they feel unable to stop using their phone in class
- 3% of students become defiant and aggressive when asked to not have their phone in class

When asked about the negative effects of cell phones at school and inside classrooms, this is how teachers responded:

- Students use their cell phones for inappropriate activities
- Social media acts as a distraction for students
- It's hard to supervise what students are doing on their phones
- Students indulge in texting during class, most often covertly
- Social media notifications are constantly distracting students' attention to lessons
- Photos, recordings and other activities take place in the classroom that others are unaware of and have not consented to, which in turn creates issues between peers.

Thank you for your understanding regarding this important matter. The outcomes this rule will have regarding the increase in learning and elimination of distractions related to inappropriate cell phone use will have a positive impact on all students and staff. Our goal is to keep the focus on learning and positive social interactions within the classroom. We believe that everyone will be positively influenced following the implementation of this new policy.