



Board Office

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August 28, 2024

Dear Seven Oaks Families:

Subject: New Divisional Cell Phone Guidelines for 2024 – 2025

On August 15, 2024, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister, Nello Altomare, informed all Manitoba School Divisions to review and revise use of technology policies to include clear guidelines for cell phone use in Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools.

As we continue to understand the impact of cell phones, we've observed that frequent interruptions, particularly from social media notifications, can disrupt learning, encourage habit forming behaviours and increase instances of cyberbullying. Although cell phones aren't themselves inherently harmful, their misuse and overuse can negatively impact the learning environment and student well-being.

In alignment with provincial guidelines and our responsibility for fostering safe, caring, respectful and inclusive schools, Seven Oaks School Division will be implementing consistent expectations for cell phone use across all our schools. Students with specific educational or medical needs, outlined in Student-Specific Plans, will continue to have access as necessary.

New Guidelines for September 2024:

Kindergarten to Grade 8: Students will not be permitted to use or access cell phones during the school day, including breaks and lunch. All students are required to leave their cell phones at home, in their bag or locker during the school day.

Grade 9 to 12: Access to and use of cell phones will not be permitted during class time. Use of cell phones is permitted during breaks/lunch as well as for educational purposes when directed by classroom teachers.

We understand that these guidelines represent a change, and will be following up with students during K to 8 orientation meetings along with grade 9 to 12 teacher advisor meetings to clarify expectations and offer support.

Our aim is to create focused and productive learning environments for all students in Seven Oaks School Division. We remain committed to promoting responsible digital citizenship and invite families to participate in this vital conversation. For helpful resources on managing screen time and promoting digital citizenship, please explore the following links:

- [Screen time and digital media: Advice for parents of school-aged children and teens | Caring for kids \(cps.ca\)](#)
- [Welcome to MediaSmarts | MediaSmarts](#)
- [Resources & Research: Online Safety – protectchildren.ca](#)

If you have any questions, please be certain to contact your school's administration.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued commitment to our students' success. We look forward to a wonderful school year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Kreml". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a stylized "Kreml".

Tony Kreml
Superintendent
Seven Oaks School Division