

Policy and Information Release

This notice is intended for Regional Centres for Education (RCEs), Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), and principals. Please convey to all staff for whom this information is relevant.

Provincial Directive on Cell Phone Use in Schools

Nova Scotia is implementing a new Provincial Directive on Cell Phone Use in Schools to create an optimal educational environment at all grade levels that maximizes student learning, safety, and positive social interactions. This directive aims to reduce distractions and the potential for cyberbullying and inappropriate use of technology, creating school environments where children and youth can thrive. This Policy and Information Release is intended to support the *Provincial Code of Conduct Policy* and provide direction and clarification related to the use of personal cell phones in schools.

Directive

Beginning September 2024, all public schools in Nova Scotia will ensure that access to personal cell phones during the school day adheres to the following expectations:

- Every student, PP–12, will have their personal cell phones turned off and stored during instructional time.
- Students in grades PP–6 will turn off and store their cell phones for the entire school day, including non-instructional times.
- Students in grades 7–12 may be permitted to use their cell phones during non-instructional times (between classes, recess, lunch, afterschool activities) as determined by the school.
- Students in grades 7–12 may also be permitted to use their cell phones when directed by the teacher as part of a planned learning experience.
- Cell phones are not permitted in washrooms and/or change rooms at any time.
- Exceptions may be made to address students' individual needs (medical or ability) when determined in consultation with Student Planning Team, which includes parents/caregivers.
- Teachers and support staff will reinforce these expectations by modelling behaviour and not using personal cell phones during class for non-work-related reasons.
- Restricted access to social media sites on wifi networks will continue.
- In accordance with section 39(2)(e) of the *Education Act*, principals can direct a student to surrender their phone if not complying with expectations and will follow the *Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy* when addressing non-compliance.
- Principals will work closely with staff and the School Advisory Council to develop an implementation plan specific to their school.
- Principals will ensure that school specific expectations are communicated in advance of, and throughout, the school year.

Implementation

EECD acknowledges that there are administrative duties associated with this policy, and that EECD and RCE/CSAP staff will play a significant role in its implementation. We are committed to working with RCEs and the CSAP to ensure the policy is successfully put into practice.

Original signed by

Hon. Becky Druhan

Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development