



August 20, 2024

Verndale School Students, Parents, and Guardians:

As we continue to strive for excellence in providing the best possible learning environment for our students, I am writing to inform you of an important update to our personal electronic device policy, effective for the 2024-2025 school year as well as a few other changes.

The primary goal of this updated policy is to foster a focused, distraction-free learning environment and to ensure the safety and privacy of all students at Verndale Public School. We believe that minimizing the presence of cell phones and other electronic devices during school hours will significantly enhance our student's educational experience.

**Why the changes:**

- Maximize the learning time and experience with students without the disruption of cell phones or other electronic devices.
- Help develop more time for social interaction with students without the cell phones consuming the environment.
- Promote student health by turning off the outside distractions and help students focus on the course content and utilize the learning time to complete assignments, etc.
- Work to avoid harassment and bullying of others through the connectivity of the cell phone during the academic day.
- Improve our school safety plan in support of all students.

**Below are the practices that we are requiring of students under the new electronic devices practices at Verndale Public School:**

- Cell phones and other personal electronic devices capable of communication, such as those used for texting, answering, and receiving calls, are not permitted in classrooms, hallways, lunch areas, during recess, or in bathrooms during the school day.

- Students who bring cell phones/Bluetooth earbuds, and/or smartwatches capable of communication, such as texting, answering, and receiving calls will be required to silence or turn off their devices and store them in designated cell phone lockers from the beginning of the school day until the end.
- At the start of the school day, students will check their devices into designated lockers located in their homerooms or 1st-hour classrooms.
  - Students arriving midday must check their devices in at the office for secure storage in their designated locker.
  - Students will be responsible for the key to their locker, while the office will retain a backup key. If a key is lost, there will be a charge to make a new key.
- These restrictions also apply during field trips and school events, as they are considered extensions of the classroom learning environment.
- At the end of the school day, students will retrieve their devices from their homerooms or 1st-hour classrooms.
  - Students leaving midday or for open campus must check their devices out from the office and return them upon coming back.
  - High school students in classes with substitute teachers will check out their devices from the office at the end of the school day.

### **Cell Phone or Other Electronic Devices School Discipline:**

**First Violation:** The device will be confiscated by the teacher, brought to the office to be stored in the designated locker, and returned at the end of the school day. A warning will be issued to the student and parents/guardians will be notified.

**Second Violation:** The device will be confiscated by the teacher, brought to the office to be stored in the designated locker, and will be returned only to a parent or guardian. Administration will conference with the student and communicate with parents/guardians about future violations. The student will be assigned a detention and put on the restricted list.

**Any Further Violations:** The device will be confiscated by the teacher and given to administration. The phone will be returned only to a parent or guardian and a student-parent/guardian meeting will take place to discuss the violation and create a plan for the student. Detention, suspension, and/or MSHSL code of conduct consequences will be discussed and assigned. The student will be put on the restricted list.

In case of an emergency, students may use the school office phone to contact parents or guardians. Parents and guardians should contact the school office to relay urgent messages to their students. Also, students who need to use their devices for medical reasons must provide documentation from a healthcare provider. Other requests for exceptions to this policy, particularly those requiring the use of a device, may be submitted to administration and will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis. To maintain the integrity of the policy, students with exceptions will be expected to turn their device(s) in to their teacher each class period and must not be visible during passing time or lunchtime. Please note the school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

We understand that this policy represents a significant change and appreciate your cooperation and support in helping us maintain a productive and safe educational environment. In addition to this significant change, the school board has approved a policy allowing students in grades 7-12 to wear headgear throughout the week, provided that it is affiliated with Verndale School or its related activities. This ensures school spirit and unity while maintaining a respectful and distraction-free learning environment.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Katie Bolland  
Principal  
Verndale Public School