



401 Centre Street, Niverville, MB R0A 0A1
Ph: 204-388-9761

August 30, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Important Information: Niverville High School Cellphone Policy

Background

As a way to minimize distractions in schools, the Manitoba government is banning the use of cellphones in the classroom starting this September, Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Nello Altomare announced on August 15, 2024.

“We want young people to be able to focus in class so they can learn more and feel confident. We know cellphones can be a real distraction for students – studies show it can take up to 20 minutes for a child to refocus on what they were learning once distracted,” Altomare said. “These provincial guidelines will give teachers the tools they need to keep students focused and ensure class time is spent on learning. Plus, we will take safety and medical concerns into account so all risks are minimized.”

Schools and school divisions will implement updated policies as students head back to school in September to ensure consistency across the province, which include:

- banning cellphone use during school hours, including lunch and breaks, for students in kindergarten to Grade 8;
- banning cellphone use for students in grades 9 to 12 during class time, with cellphone use permitted during **breaks and lunch**; and
- clear direction for cellphone use in classrooms for school staff.

Guidelines will include exceptions to support students with medical and diverse learning needs, as well as cellphone use for educational purposes in grades 9 to 12 when directed by classroom teachers.

Under the Public Schools Act, school divisions are required to establish use of technology policies tailored to local needs.

Niverville High School Policy Overview

Effective September 3, 2024, Niverville High School will implement a new cellphone policy in alignment with the Manitoba government's directive aimed at minimizing distractions and enhancing the learning environment. This policy is designed to ensure that students remain focused during instructional time while acknowledging the importance of access to technology for educational and safety purposes.

Rationale

This policy is designed to create a learning environment where students can focus on their studies without the distraction of cellphones. By setting clear expectations and providing guidelines for appropriate cellphone use, Niverville High School aims to enhance student engagement, promote positive social interactions, and support the overall well-being of all students.



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Policy Enforcement:

Students found using their cellphones in violation of this policy will be subject to the following consequences:

- a. **First Offense:** Verbal warning and confiscation (turned in to the office) of the cellphone until the end of the school day
- b. **Second Offense:** Confiscation of the cellphone (turned in to the office), parent/guardian notification, and the cellphone returned only to a parent/guardian.
- c. **Third Offense:** Confiscation, parent/guardian meeting, and potential loss of cellphone privileges during school hours for a specified period.

Policy Details:

1. Cellphone Use in Grades 9 to 12:
 - a. Class Time: Students in grades 9 to 12 **are not permitted** to use cellphones during class time. Cellphones must be stored in a designated area (e.g., backpacks, lockers, or teacher designated classroom storage) and kept on silent mode. A reminder, students are not allowed to have cellphones in any washroom.
 - b. Breaks and Lunch: Students **are permitted** to use their cellphones during breaks and lunch periods. A washroom break while in class does not constitute as a break. Students using their cellphones in the halls or bathrooms will have the same consequences as students using cellphones in the classroom. Students are encouraged to engage with their peers and participate in school activities during these times.
2. Cellphone Use for Educational Purposes:
 - a. Exceptions are allowed for educational purposes when explicitly directed by the classroom teacher and through prior communication and consultation with the school principal. In such cases, the teacher will provide clear instructions on when and how cellphones may be used.
 - b. During instructional time, students are expected to keep earbuds and headphones removed. Access to music can be through the student's chromebook during times designated by the teacher.
3. Medical and Diverse Learning Needs:
 - a. Exceptions to the cellphone policy will be made for students with documented medical needs or diverse learning profiles. These students must have a plan in place, through prior consultation with school staff.
 - b. Students with approved exceptions must use their cellphones in a manner that does not disrupt the learning environment.



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4. Staff Guidelines:

- a. All staff members are expected to model appropriate cellphone use. Personal cellphone use during instructional time will not be permitted unless required for educational purposes or in cases of emergency.
- b. Staff will receive clear direction on how to enforce the policy consistently across all classrooms.

5. Communication to Parents/Guardians, Students and Staff:

- a. The policy will be communicated to all Parents/Guardians, Students and Staff at the beginning of the school year through the Niverville High School website, email, in class and during school orientation sessions.
- b. Ongoing reminders, updates and check-ins (with students) will be provided as needed to ensure the policy is well understood and consistently followed.
- c. The school will continuously evaluate the implementation of this policy.

Open communication is key to a successful school experience, so please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns related to this policy. We are here to support you.

(Sources: <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?archive=&item=64657>)

Manitoba Government Bans Cellphone Use in Classrooms.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Grosskopf".

Paul Grosskopf
Principal
Niverville High School

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Sereda".

Graham Sereda
Vice Principal
Niverville High School