

NEW DRAFT Cell Phone/Smart devices Policy for AGS

Effective 2023-2024

Preamble or rationale

The use of technology in schools has become part of our daily routine and has had a very positive effect on student learning. All students in grade 7-12 have their own Chromebook with access to the internet in all areas of the school. Grade 4-6 students have access to the chrome books as teachers sign them out for instructional groups. Chromebooks and the internet are used on a regular basis in our classrooms. The school has a very extensive technology policy (please refer to our webpage). The school has placed restrictions on the accessibility to the internet to help keep our students safe. This keeps all students during the school day from participating in disrespectful and sometimes illegal activities online.

In today's school's more and more students have personal mobile devices, which they carry with them. The school has no control over these devices and their accessibility to the internet. This has created many discipline issues around cyber bullying. Some of these issues were serious enough for families that police have been involved. Due to these issues, the school has developed a cell phone policy that will be implemented this year.

This school policy is supported by *The Nova Scotia Education Act*, 2018, c. 1, Sch. A, s. 1. According to the Nova Scotia Education Act, Principals and Vice Principals are to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to create and maintain a safe, orderly, positive and effective environment. It is also the duty of every student enrolled in a public school to contribute to an orderly and safe learning environment; respect the rights of others; and comply with the discipline policies of the school.

The policy statements:

- Parent communication to students must go through the administrative assistants during regular school hours. The use of cell phones and smart devices are not permitted. Any student using a cell phone or smart device will have it taken from them immediately.
- Students may have a cell phone in their school bag for after school use only. Smart devices if used during the day will be confiscated. They are not permitted to use them from the time the student boards the bus or enters the school. This continues until they get off the bus or leave the school.
- If a student needs to communicate to a family member during the day, they must do so through one of the administrative assistants, nurses or administrators.
- **In after school activities only**, may a student use a cell phone or smart device to contact their parents? Examples of this would be attending a football game, a safari trip or any event after school hours.
- Cell phones being used as cameras are not to be used at any presentations during regular school hours. They are not allowed in school

Policy Consequences

- If a student is found using their cell phone or smart device, they will lose it, for the day. It will be given to an administrator to hold. If the student refuses to hand over the device, they will be disciplined for “Defying school authority and staff members” under the Code of Conduct. This will be documented and parents will be called. The device will be recorded and stored in the office. It will remain with the administrator for one school day. The next school day a parent may pick it up. **The device will not be returned to the student.** Note: If a device is taken on Friday, it can only be picked up on Monday. A level one form on the code of conduct will be issued.
- If there is a second offense. The same practice will continue, except the administrator will keep the device for three school days including over the weekend. The device will only be returned to the parent on day three. The offense will be documented as a level one behavior under the code.
- If the behavior continues, and there is a third incident, a level 2 code of conduct will be issued. The device will remain with the administrator for one week. The parent may pick it up after the one-week period.
- If the student refuses to respect this policy and the code of conduct, a meeting must take place with a parent and any or all of the following may take place
 1. The device could be taken for up to a month
 2. When the device is returned the student must pass their device into an administrative office on a daily basis when they arrive. The time frame for this will be determined by Administration.
 3. The student may be suspended from school.
- The Principal will determine the length of the suspension based on the behavior and history of the student. Two days will be the minimum suspension.

Conclusion

As educators, we encourage parents to be aware of the internet activity of their children.

It is important for parents to note that the school is not responsible for the student’s internet activity outside of the regular school hours. If there is illegal use of the internet and smart devices involving students outside of school, parents will be directed to the police.

It is the responsibility of administration to provide a safe and comfortable learning atmosphere for all students and we will continue to work with students and parents on a daily basis to provide this.

We ask parents for your understanding and support as we implement this new policy. Our goal is to continue to support a positive learning environment for your children.

