



North Saanich Middle School

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March 12, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Re: Cell Phones and Electronic Devices at School

When we return from Spring Break on April 1, 2019, we are going to have new expectations for cell phone/electronic use at NSMS. In the past, we have allowed students to use their phones at lunch and recess to listen to music or play games. For many years, this was a very small portion of our students, but this year we have seen an increasingly larger number of students only engaging at lunch and recess on their devices. The new research on healthy cell phone/electronic use, our staff observations, and conversations that we are having with many parents is that our society's increased need to be connected with others through our devices is unhealthy. We know that we can help and encourage our students to be more physically and socially active by having their phones and electronic devices away during these times.

The basic expectation will be that students keep their phones in their lockers; this includes during lunch and recess. This will be new to NSMS students, but the other middle schools in our district have already adopted this policy and they are finding that the kids are happier and more engaged with friends.

Students will still use electronic devices as learning tools in the classroom, and this will continue to be at the professional discretion of the teacher. However, our staff are already telling us that students are using their phones less frequently in class and that they are asking students to keep phones in their lockers when not needed. This just takes away the temptation to keep checking their phone and helps them to better focus on their learning.

We know that many parents still want to be able to communicate with their children. Your child still has the opportunity to do this at school. Students just need to let their teacher know they need to text their parents at an appropriate time. Students are also welcome to come to the office and use the school phone, and we always have someone at NSMS answering the phones if you need to be in touch with your child. And, of course, students will continue to be able to use their devices both before and after school.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns. We believe this is a positive step in helping our students learn how to use their phones in both a healthy and appropriate manner.

Sincerely,

Kal Russell
Principal