



Rationale

This protocol has been created to:

- support students to develop safe, responsible and respectful cell phone practices;
- reduce the impact that inappropriate phone usage has on class learning, the development of resilience as well as administration and teaching time; and
- support students to manage their relationship with technology and develop long term healthy lifestyle habits; including developing the capacity to engage in developmentally appropriate and healthy activities during instructional “down time” that do not involve technology.

Scope

Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to, mobile hand-held devices, cell phones, smart watches, iPods and other music players, gaming devices, and earbuds. In this protocol, they are collectively referred to as ‘*cell phones*’ as these devices are very much an all-in-one, personal electronic device. This protocol is established to reduce distractions in class and to improve student engagement during instructional time. For the purposes of this protocol, instructional time is established to be from the start to the end of class time, regardless of what the class activities may include.

Student Responsibilities

All Students (Grade 7 to Grade 12)

- At all times, students must follow district [Policy 810: Use of Information and Communications Technology](#).
- Students may own and use a cell phone outside of school hours while parent/caregiver(s) monitor its responsible use.
- Students are encouraged to leave cell phones at home.
- Students have access to phones at school should they need to contact their parents/caregivers. This can be done at the office or with the permission of the teacher in the student’s classroom.
- Students may use cell phones on the journey to and from school and during non-instructional times while at school. In doing so, students are encouraged to use them responsibly.
- Students who bring a cell phone to school must switch it off, put it on airplane mode, turn off notifications and either hand it in at the office for safe keeping to be collected at the end of the day, or store it in their locker or school bag during instructional time. Instructional times include assemblies and other school wide activities like fire drills.
- Students may access their cell phones before and after school and during school wide scheduled break times. All other times are cell phone free.
- The device should not be accessed for recreational use (music, social media, etc.) during instructional time.
- Photos, videos or audio recordings are to be taken only with permission of all parties and with the agreement of the supervising teacher.
- Cell phones cannot be taken into formal assessment situations.
- Use of cell phones on field trips and extra-curricular excursions will be specified by the teacher for the particular activity.

Students in Grade 11 and 12 (Seniors)

The protocol recognizes that older students may have a range of responsibilities and the capacity to use a personal device in a way that does not distract but arguably, supports their learning. As students transition towards adulthood, they are more likely to be working, managing complex arrangements, and using a range of learning tools independently. Therefore, teachers may determine that a senior student:

- may use a cell phone during instructional time, for a specific task, for a specific time under teacher supervision and at the explicit direction of a teacher;
- may store their device on their person as required, with the teacher's knowledge and permission.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities*Inappropriate use of cell phones outside of this policy*

- Parents/caregivers accept responsibility for supervision and development of responsible use of cell phones by their children.
- Resources are available to parents/caregivers and students should they encounter issues with cell phones.

Communication

- Parents/caregivers should support the policy by sending messages to cell phones outside of instructional times and not expecting a response from their child during instructional times.
- For non-urgent issues that require attention before the end of the given school day, parent/caregivers are encouraged to leave a message through the office.
- The school communicates via established protocols to caregivers should there be an emergency requiring evacuation or lock down.
- Parents/caregivers can expect to be contacted directly by school staff should their child be injured and/or require serious medical attention.
- Parents/caregivers should contact the office in case of an emergency. Your child will be immediately and confidentially notified of the need to communicate with a parent/caregiver.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff at Mount Sentinel Secondary School:

- model the appropriate use of cell phones at school;
- use cell phones to fulfill duties e.g., notify emergency services, report safety issues to administration, manage class attendance, communicate with parents and complete administrative tasks when not able to access laptop devices;
- participate in establishing shared knowledge of this protocol with students and their parents/caregivers by reviewing and discussing with all students enrolled in their class and following up with parents are required;
- implement the protocol as outlined and monitor the cell phone free classroom learning environment consistently;
- develop and employ class routines to achieve a distraction and interruption free environment e.g. designating space in the classrooms for students to place their bags;
- provide explicit instruction about the appropriate and acceptable use of cell phones in their learning context when applicable.

Individual Exemptions

Individual students with documented and verified needs will work with the relevant School Based Team member (principal, vice principal, counsellor, inclusion support teacher or other trusted teacher) to develop and enact an appropriate exemption plan. The exemption plan, requires that the student turns off all notifications to “recreational apps.” Final approval of the plan is given by the principal and will be communicated to the staff working directly with the student.

Security

Mount Sentinel Secondary School cannot take responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of any electronic device that is brought to school.

Response and Consequence of Misuse

The protocol implementation process will require a period of establishing shared expectations, an understanding of student, parent, and staff responsibilities, and an awareness of the consequences of not meeting the expectations of this protocol. Following a reasonable time for “field testing,” students will be expected to follow this protocol consistently in all their classes.

Response to Misuse

- Students who misuse devices according to this protocol will be subject to district [Policy 310: Code of Conduct](#) the [Mount Sentinel School Code of Conduct](#) published on our website.
- Staff have the right to instruct a student to hand in the device to the office and/or confiscate as delegated by the principal.
- Refusal by students to co-operate will result in a referral to administration and may result in an in school suspension from class until the issue is resolved.
- Parents or caregivers are normally required to collect the device from the office unless there are extenuating circumstances, which are determined by the principal or vice principal.
- Serious or repeated misuse will be treated as willful or persistent disobedience and could lead to referral to the District Safe School coordinator and/or suspension from school.
- All personal electronic devices must be used at all times within the district and school policies, administrative procedures and codes of conduct.

Progressive Consequences to Misuse

- **1st Incident:**
 - cell phone is given to the teacher until the end of class
- **2nd Incident:**
 - cell phone goes to the office and the student picks it up at the end of the day
- **3rd Incident:**

Consequences may include:

 - a meeting with parents and administration
 - storing the phone in the office during class time for a specified number of days
 - a cell phone use contract
 - if incidents are frequent and in multiple classes, cell phone privileges will be reevaluated

Field Testing

This protocol was developed by the school administration with the support of our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and with the input and shared ownership of the staff. Aspects of this protocol have been established based on the work of our Middle Years Program starting in September and the Career Life Connections 12 and senior Media Arts classes in December. To successfully implement this protocol school wide, all staff required the opportunity to develop a shared understanding with our learners and parent/caregivers starting the week of April 11, 2023. The DRAFT protocol as it was written started on Thursday, April 13. The opportunity for broader school community input and revision was open until April 21. On April 24, the DRAFT protocol was republished with no revisions as the guiding protocol to our practice moving forward to the end of 2022/23.

A review of the protocol was completed in May, 2023 with the recommendation to continue for 2023 - 2024.