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M.E. Belanger
Principal

Teresa McBride
Vice Principal

NEW POLICY
RE: CELL PHONES, iPods, MP3, VIDEO GAMES

We do live in a changing world. As parents and educators, we are frequently called upon to address new or developing concerns. All of these new technologies, referenced above, appear at school on a daily basis.

iPods, MP3's, and VIDEO GAMES

From an educator's standpoint, several concerns arise regarding these electronic devices:

- During class all are a distraction to the learning environment.
- During less structured time, all are solitary activities, minimizing opportunities to develop social skills.
- It is impossible to monitor content, and it is known that inappropriate audio & graphics (videos and photos) can be shared.
- Students using earphones are not sufficiently aware of their surroundings in the case of an emergency.

These electronic devices however, are considered by many to be a positive behavioural choice, during the bus ride home.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones present an even greater concern, as there is the potential for others to be negatively impacted by their inappropriate use.

- Most cell phones that we're seeing at school have cameras, posing a threat to privacy. Cell phones discreetly carried into a bathroom, or change room, make everyone else in the room vulnerable to unwanted exposure (easily uploaded to the Internet).
- Most cell phones allow text messaging. We have had incidents of students "texting" each other discreetly during class. In addition to interfering in the students' learning environment, should "texting" occur while the students are writing tests, the integrity of the assessment is drawn into question.
- Students have also been known to discreetly play games on their cells, while others create reasons to leave class, with the intention of picking up recent text messages.

From a parent's standpoint cell phones offer a measure of reassurance, particularly for students who walk to and from school without an adult.

You may not be aware, that teachers have access to an outside phone line in their classrooms, and may make this line available to students at the teacher's discretion. Furthermore, the routine of the office staff is to clear the voicemail messages (728-1302) every half-hour.

NEW POLICY

Having consulted the staff and members of School Council, we will be adopting the following policy regarding cell phones, iPods, MP3's and video games:

- We will respect the right of parents to choose to provide these electronic devices to their children.
- We will respect a parent's decision to send these electronics to and from school with his/her child.
- We will expect cell phones to remain turned off throughout the school day, and we expect all of these devices to be kept in the student's knapsack while on school property.

Please rest assured that we will support your child through this new change in policy. Teachers will have a class discussion on this topic early in the week of April 30, 2007. Students who forget the new rules, by getting out any of these electronic devices while on school property, will be reminded of the new policy. Effective May 7th, students who do not follow the policy may receive any of the following consequences: safekeeping of the device until dismissal; a Think Sheet; a warning letter of suspension; suspension. We may differentiate the consequences assigned as cell phones pose a greater concern than the music, and video devices.

Sincerely,

M. Belanger
Principal

T. McBride
Vice Principal

