

**Our Lady Of Fatima Catholic School**  
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February 4, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians:

A number of years ago, Our Lady of Fatima became one of the first schools in the region to allow cell phones in our classrooms. At that time, we felt that it was important that students learn how to use their phones appropriately. With resources rapidly moving to online only, it was an opportunity for our students to gain access at a time we did not have access to as great a number of Chromebooks as we do today.

We have put in place a number of guidelines and created a contract regarding the use of cellphones in school that we have asked students and parents to sign. Student learning and student safety are our main concerns. Guidelines and policies are in place as we are especially aware of instances of cyber bullying with the use of social media platforms, messaging and other communication. Until recently, these structures have been effective.

Unfortunately, this year, although some parents and students have followed the policies, a large number of students and parents have not been adhering to the guidelines. Staff members have been spending an unacceptably large amount of time monitoring student use and dealing with disciplinary issues resulting from inappropriate use. This distracts not only from learning, but does not allow students to focus on building positive social interactions and relationships.

As a result, we are moving towards a ban on cell phone use. Phones will no longer be allowed to use as calculators or other academic purposes. This duplicates policies and procedures that are held at the high school level. With our extensive access to Chromebooks, lack of access to cell phones will not impact student learning. Indeed, the removal of the distractions and inappropriate use of cell phones will allow students to focus more attentively to their learning tasks.

Students must leave their phones in their backpacks, which are to be zipped up at all times, or will be placed in a space provided in the classroom. Bringing a cell phone to school is a choice made by parents and/or students and therefore we do not take responsibility for damage or loss under any circumstances. As has always been proper procedure, if students need to contact their parents for any reason throughout the day, they are to obtain teacher permission to go to the office to call using the office phone. Proper procedure further requires that parents call the office and leave a message if they need to get a message through to their child.

Thank you for your support in helping us create a safe, distraction free, bully free learning environment for your child.

Our Lady of Fatima Staff