

August 2023

Dear BES Families,

Re: Away for the Day

Researchers from the Alberta Teachers' Association, the University of Alberta, Boston Children's Hospital, and Harvard Medical School are working on a collaborative initiative to better understand the scope of physical, mental and social consequences of digital technologies. Key findings indicate that although digital technologies can enhance teaching and learning activities, digital technologies (particularly cell phones) are a growing distraction in the learning environment. Students' ability to focus on educational tasks has decreased, anxiety has increased, and students are coming to school tired.

This research was first referenced at a spring School Council meeting. With the support of School Council and senior administration, our school has adopted the following policy:

Cell phones, smart watches and any other communication devices are to be in student backpacks from the start of homeroom until after the last period of the day (this includes morning and lunch breaks while on school property). Students who leave school grounds with parent permission (Grade 7 & 8 in general) are asked to ensure their device is put away before entering school grounds. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device. **Devices such as tablets and personal laptops may be used as a learning tool during instructional hours, under the direct supervision of a teacher, but not during breaks.**

The result of not respecting the school policy will be the following:

- First time: students who "forget" receive a warning and are asked to put it in their backpack
- Second time: the phone is collected and taken to the office for the student to pick-up at the end of the day and a parent is notified
- Third offense: the parent is asked to pick up the phone and the student and parent must meet with administration

Students are always welcome to use the school phone to call home and parents are welcome to call the school office if they need to get an important message to their child. If a student needs to contact a family member with their personal device they are required to inform their teacher for permission or come to the main office for support.

If you have any questions, please contact Craig Kestle, Principal (craig.kestle@crps.ca)

Sincerely,
Craig Kestle