

Weekdays 'til 6

At MHPSD we proudly commit to challenging and inspiring success, confidence, and hope in each child; families play a vital role in helping us achieve this as success at school begins at home. Parent involvement and ongoing communication positively impact student success.

Wellness is a priority in Medicine Hat Public Schools. Across our school division we are implementing a new approach to the manage increasing demands of emails and texts* both internally and externally. Weekdays 'til 6 is a new MHPSD communications practice where we recommend that non-emergency emails and text conversations should only occur between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays, in most cases.

This new initiative honours the personal time of parents, families, students and staff, supporting our wellness focus. We care about our students, families and staff and we are hopeful that this will reduce the unhealthy habit of being constantly connected to electronic devices.

*Division staff are discouraged from sharing their personal telephone numbers with students and families. "Text" refers to standard text messaging and the use of messaging apps.

The Why:

- Our hope is that Weekdays 'til 6 will support everyone in our MHPSD family to enjoy healthy work/life balance which involves evenings spent engaged in activities that bring reinvigoration and rest.
- Late-night email/text exchanges can prove troublesome for all of us. When we are tired from the day, our messages and responses can, at times, lead to misunderstandings and can make it more difficult to have a restful sleep.
- MHPSD strives to ensure staff are ready to deliver their very best to students each day! We realize their demanding roles require staff to continue to work in the evenings, as they plan and prepare for the next day. Weekdays 'til 6 ensures that evening work does not have to include emails and texts which, like any business, will be responded to during business hours.

What it Means:

- Division staff and administration are encouraged **not** to start non-emergency telephone, text* (including messaging apps), email, online education apps, (internal or external) before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m. weekdays, and at any point over the weekend, unless prior arrangements have been made. This does not mean that staff are required to work from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. each weekday, rather to find an important balance to meet the communication needs of the students and families that we serve.
- Parents/guardians and students are welcome to email or text division staff at any time, with the understanding that staff are encouraged to respond during business hours and within two workdays.
- Parents/guardians and students are asked to be understanding of the many demands placed on division staff, while staff **may** respond to communication at any time, they are encouraged to respond during business hours and within two workdays to all non-emergency text messages and emails.

*Medicine Hat Public School Division strongly discourages staff from sharing their personal contact information (phone or email), and strongly encourages the use of Edsby for texting. Other examples of text messaging apps are SchoolMessenger, Remind, class dojo, etc, what's app, etc.), examples of online education tools (seesaw, google classroom).

Our goal is not to limit communication within the Medicine Hat Public School Division community, rather to support a manageable work-life balance for all, while creating a level of common expectations regarding communications.

Weekdays 'til 6 is not a policy, it is a guideline that is being led by the central office leadership team and supported by the Board. Central office communications will, whenever possible, follow these guidelines. We will continue to review and modify our e-communications approach as necessary to support student, family and staff wellness. If you need more information about Weekdays 'til 6, please talk to your child's principal.