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Phones in the classroom

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If you have ever been in a conversation with someone and their phone rings, and they answer it, you know what an awkward situation you are thrust into.

Suddenly, you are the person who doesn't matter. Whoever the person is on the other end of the phone, has replaced you in that conversation.

For me, that's pretty much a conversation finisher. I won't stand there like an idiot, while the other person discusses their upcoming fishing trip or who's coming over for Christmas dinner, and relegates you to being a bystander.

Unless you are on a heart transplant list, or your wife is going into labour at any time, the polite thing to do, is to let the call go to voice mail, listen to the message later, and return the call if necessary.

When I was a kid, I was helping, sort of, my father do some work on a drain pipe in the backyard of our house. It was a summer day, and I heard the telephone ring through the open window.

When I pointed this out, my father said, ?let it ring.?

I insisted we should answer the phone. He said, ?I'm not a slave to a machine. Just because a bell is ringing, doesn't mean I'm going to stop my valuable work here. If it's important, they will call back.?

That really stuck with me. Before cell phones, people really did run to answer the telephone, just because a bell told them to.

Most of the telephone calls I get via my landline these days are nonsense calls. There is either no one there or someone is trying to sell me something. I still have a landline because it makes a huge difference when doing a telephone interview.

However, it is still frustrating to answer a call and hear dead air, which is a signal that someone at a call centre is waiting for someone to answer an automatically dialled call before flipping a switch and deciding to speak.

I usually hang up before they start their spiel about telling me my computer is infected with a virus and I need to pay them to ?fix it'.

The province has just announced it is introducing ?new measures' to crack down on cellphone use and vaping in a school. It's not legislated, so I assume it's guidelines for teachers.

Reports say both parents and teachers have shared the ?growing problem of cellphone distractions in class.'

What took them so long, and why does it need some kind of provincial decree to tell a kid not to be on their phone during class time?

A kid shouldn't have to be told not to be on their phone during class. That's just common sense.

It must be frustrating for a teacher to be at the head of a classroom only to see a student focused on a phone rather than listening to the lesson.

The problem obviously starts at home.

I don't know why a kid needs a phone in the first place. Anyone they want to speak to, and if you're a kid, that's another kid you

know at school, is probably only a few feet away for the entire day.

The parents are paying for the kid's phone. They should explain the phone is a privilege and should apply rules about its usage before the kid leaves home.

Pretty simple ? this phone is for emergencies only, don't use it in the classroom.

The fact that this problem requires action by the Ministry of Education is disturbing. The report says teachers will undergo mandatory training regarding kids using cell phones.

Haven't teachers already undergone training on how to control kids in the classroom? Isn't this why they go to teacher's college?

Every kid knows the teacher is in charge when the bell rings to signal the start of the school day.

It's pretty simple - make an announcement at the start of the school year.

?I'm Ms. Crabapple, your new teacher. The use of phones is not allowed in this classroom. If you have a phone, it must be turned off and kept in your backpack or locker.?

If a kid complains about the rule, parents need to back up the teacher and let the kid know the teacher controls the classroom, and they must abide by the rules.

I can't think of a single reason why a parent would insist their child be given permission to use a phone during class.

Phone etiquette in general needs to be observed by everyone, not just in the classroom.