



Fall 2023

RE: CELL PHONES

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Technology has allowed cell phones to become part of the fabric of our society. The recent affordability of cell phones has enabled families to purchase these devices for their children. Unfortunately, cell phones have also become a major disruption to the educational process in our school.

Ringling cell phones have disrupted classes and distracted students who should be paying attention to the lesson at hand. Students have been caught text messaging during class and in other areas of the building. Furthermore, text messaging has been used as a means to bully and tease students. Newer cell phones with camera and video capabilities have been used during the school day, causing a disruption to classes, study halls, and the lunch period.

For these reasons and others, **all students' cell phones must be stored in their lockers in the "off" position from the moment students enter the building until 3:30 P.M. or the official early dismissal time on specified days.**

Below is the cell phone policy as it appears in our school handbook:

Electronic Devices

Cameras, CD Players, MP3 Players, iPods, etc. are not to be used or in a student's possession during school hours (9:11a.m.-3:30p.m.). These items are to be turned off and in the student's hall locker. Limited use of music devices—not to include phones or cameras—may be allowed during lunch at the discretion of the lunch monitors.

Cell Phones

Phones are permitted in school, but must remain turned off and in the student's hall locker during school hours. All electronic devices are subject to confiscation and possible parental notification if they are found in use. Repeated violations may result in further disciplinary action.

- *1st Offense: Confiscation*
- *2nd Offense: parents must pick up the device*

Students violating the cell phone policy should expect no privacy in regard to the content of their phone when confiscated by school officials.

Lastly, I have included some important points to consider when thinking of school safety and cell phones.

Cell Phones Can Detract From School Safety & Crisis Preparedness

1. Cell phones have been used for calling in bomb threats to schools.
2. Student use of cell phones could potentially detonate a real bomb if one is actually on campus.
3. Cell phone use by students can hamper rumor control and, in doing so, disrupt and delay effective public safety personnel response.
4. Cell phone use by students can impede public safety response by accelerating parental response to the scene of an emergency during times when officials may be attempting to evaluate students to another site.
5. Cell phone systems typically overload during a real major crisis (as they did during the Columbine tragedy, WTC attacks, etc), and usage by a large number of students at once could add to the overload and knock out cell phone systems quicker than may normally occur. Since cell phones may be a backup communications tool for school administrators and crisis teams, widespread student use in a crisis could thus eliminate crisis team emergency communications tools in a very short period of critical time.

Source: National School Safety and Security Services

Thank you for recognizing the importance of this issue, and for your full cooperation.

Sincerely,

Thomas Q. Brandell
Middle School Principal