

Cell Phone Policy Findings & Recommendations

Wellsville
Secondary School



Committee Work March-June 2023

- **Membership** – Parents, Students, Faculty, Administration
- **Research** – Conducted extensive educational research
- **Consultation** - Regional schools with more restrictive policies
- **Stakeholder Surveys** – Parents/Guardians, Faculty, Staff, Students

Overall Rationale

By removing devices (and their impact) from the school day, WSS is committing to increased learning and engagement for all students. By implementing this plan, Wellsville is prioritizing the safety and well-being of all our students and staff, while promoting the best learning environment possible.

Recommendation

- Starting with the 2023-2024 school year, the WSS will no longer allow students to have cell phones, wireless headphones/earbuds, or any other smart devices that possess the ability to send or receive text messages, (i.e. smart watches) on their persons for the duration of the school day.
- If any of these items are brought to school, they must be turned off and in their lockers when the second bell rings at 7:42 until the dismissal bell at 2:25.

Research

- National Institute of Health (NIH)
- Journal of Adolescent Health
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Frontiers in Psychology
- Pew Research Center
- National Center for Education Statistics
- Canadian Medical Association Journal

Mental Health

- Correlation between *increased screen time* and:
 - Worsening mental health
 - Increased behavioral problems
 - Decreased academic performance, sleep, quality of peer relationships
- The urge to check online content and incoming notifications have *negative consequences* on:
 - cognitive development
 - academic achievement

Harassment and Bullying

- Sending harassing and/or threatening messages to other students
- Taking unwanted photos of students and/or staff
- Filming altercations between others on school property
- Investigations steal precious time and learning experiences from all parties involved

Protection of Privacy

- Students are still learning how to protect their digital footprint.
 - As they learn to develop this skill, it is our collective responsibility to protect their privacy while in school.
- Sending/receiving inappropriate pictures is a rising concern to students' privacy, safety and well-being.

Classroom Disruptions

- Distractions: texting/social media during class time
- Students use bathroom breaks excessively to use their devices
- Airpods/earbuds/headphones are being worn during class time
- Devices create power struggles with adults when students are reprimanded

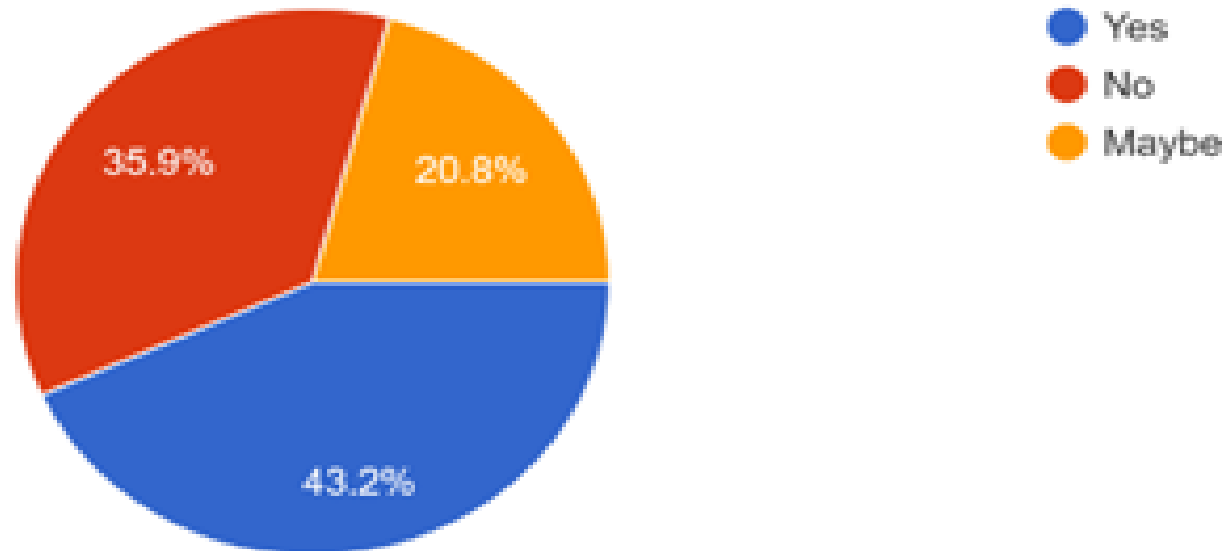
Education

- Ease and immediacy of information along with increasing propensity toward multitasking, may promote “*mile wide, inch deep*” thinking.
 - Increased resistance to patience and persistence required for in-depth scholarship
- Driver of smartphone and social media use is the *fear of missing out (FoMO)*.
 - FoMO: “a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent”
- The urge to constantly check online contents/incoming notifications have negative consequences on adolescents’ cognitive development and academic achievement
- These behaviors distract during study time, interfere with ongoing activities, and limit cognitive processing capacities

Support – Parent Survey

Would you support a more restrictive policy for cell phone and personal device use during the school day?

192 responses



Support – Dr. Kassas

School Medical Director Endorsement:

- Dr. Kassas strongly supports this shift in policy for the reasons mentioned.

"The benefits far outweigh the risks"

- *Dr. Kassas*

Current Trends

- National Center for Education Statistics (2020):
- "Cell phone bans were in place in 76% of U.S. Schools."

Current Trends Among Area Schools

Schools with more restrictive policies:

- Bolivar-Richburg
- Salamanca Intermediate
- Fillmore
- Andover
- Belfast
- Randolph

Schools considering more restrictive policies:

- Olean
- Allegany-Limestone
- Whitesville

Consequences

- **Violation 1:** Device will be confiscated by a staff member and taken to the office. The student will pick up the device in the office at the end of the school day.
- **Violation 2:** Device will be confiscated by a staff member and taken to the office. The student's parent/guardian will be notified; arrangements will be made for the device to be picked up by the parent/guardian.
- **Violation 3:** This will result in the same consequences as Violation 2, and a discipline referral will also be issued to the student, resulting in further consequences per the Code of Conduct.

Addressing Concerns

- **How do I communicate with my child if they won't have access to their phones?**
 - Phones located in every classroom, office and lobby
 - Administrative Assistants in office will relay messages as needed
 - Office permission – use in office for urgent request
- **What if there is an emergency?**
 - Phones in rooms
 - Follow emergency plans & procedures (including silence and following adult directions)
- **How do I get updates on game cancelations, practice changes, etc.?**
 - New system coming in July – *Parent Square*
- **Medical need for phone (ex. Glucometer)**
 - Medical Director will review and approve medical exemptions

Thank you for attending!

