

Cell Phone Statement and Questions and Answers to Cell Phone Policy Proposal:

While the district's cell phone policy says that students in high school are not to use their phones in class and during the passing periods, UCHS (up to this point) has allowed the teacher to decide their policy for how and when they let students have access to their phones. Over the last two years, this policy has become increasingly problematic. In some cases and in some classes, students use their phones for productive and instructional use. Far too frequently, however, phones are being used in class to text and communicate with friends and family members. So much so that it has become a major distraction for teachers trying to deliver their lessons.

The fact of the matter is that there is an increasing number of students who have become addicted to their phones. Research is showing that teenagers are looking and responding to their phones 6 to 7 times every hour. Additionally, many more students are becoming more anxious, having bouts of depression, exhibiting lower self-esteem and expressing thoughts of suicide as compared to teenagers who did not have access to smartphones (research attributes some of this to increased use of social media sites/apps).

As the school cell phone policy stands now, students who are caught using their phones in class are subject to having their phones taken from them which results in students and parents having to come after school and see an administrator to retrieve them. In many of these cases, students argue with their teachers over whether to hand over the cell phone or not. It's common for an administrator to have a line of students wanting back their phones after school. On some occasions, parents arrive at school unannounced and want their student's cell phone back, and the administrator has to stop what they are doing to go to attend to the cell phone exchange. Administrators are responsible to be out on campus after school to make sure students are safe and are being supervised. This is not happening as often as it should because they are relegated to their offices to do the daily cell phone exchanges.

While the new cell phone policy seeks to delay the giving back of cell phones for an extended period, we feel it's necessary because students and some parents are not seeing the disruption and inconvenience being caused by irresponsible use of a cell phone in class. There are over 1800 students and most have a cell phone. With that many students having phones, there is a lot potential issues in classrooms. Each day there are around 10-20 students who take out their phones and use them for inappropriate reasons during instruction time.

The belief is that students and parents are not following the "no cell phone use in class" rule because the penalty is not enough of a deterrent. To express the seriousness that the UCHS community feels about the cell phone challenge, the SSGT is considering changing the policy to give teeth and grab the attention of students and parents regarding irresponsible use of cell phone in class.

Questions and answers:

What happens if I don't have a home phone and an emergency happens while the child is home alone and can't make a call? **(Answer): Parents can always ask that their student not take their**

phone to school and keep it at home for this purpose. Parents can also state to their student that they are not to take it out of their bag until passing periods, lunch and after school. If students follow the school policy, there shouldn't be a problem with having phone access for emergencies.

What happens if something happens on the bus and the child can't make a call? (Answer): **Parents can state to their student that they are not to take out their cell phone until passing periods, lunch and after school. If students follow the school policy, there shouldn't be a problem with having phone access to make a call regarding transportation issues.**

What if I need to get ahold of my student during the day or after school? (Answer): **Parents can always ask their student not to take out their phone in class but to use the passing period, lunch and after school to retrieve messages. Twenty years ago there were not cell phones. Students and parents survived then without cell phone use. Students will be taken care of while they are at school. School officials will contact parents should there be a need to do so.**