

UCHS SSGT Proposed Cell Phone Change

April 12, 2018

On Monday, April 9th, the school's Site Governance Committee (SSGT) met to discuss concerns about student access and cell phone use during instruction time. Most students at UCHS have a cell phone and use it for a variety of purposes. Increasingly, inappropriate use of cell phones in classes is impacting our student's ability to focus and pay attention. Additionally, cell phone use is a distraction to other students and to the teacher.

Please know the proposed SSGT change in school cell phone policy is not aimed at taking away cell phone access for students. The purpose is to spell out when and where phones should be accessed while clarifying consequences tied to phone use during instructional time. Students will be allowed to check their phones during passing periods and during lunch, but students are not to take out or use their phones in any manner during instructional time (bell-to-bell). At this point, the new policy is a proposal. Site Governance Team members need your feedback for they will be voting to change or ratify the new cell phone policy.

Currently, the District's Cell Phone Policy (6980) states:

Student possession and use of cellular phones, pagers and other electronic signaling devices on school campuses and school buses, at school-sponsored activities and while under the supervision and control of school district employees is permitted under the circumstance described herein.

All students may use these devices on campus before school begins and after school ends. Students in high school grade 9-12 also may use such devices during the lunch period.

These devices must be kept out of sight and turned off during the instructional program. Unauthorized use of such devices disrupts the instructional program and distracts from the learning environment. Therefore unauthorized use is grounds for confiscation of device by school officials, including classroom teachers. Repeated unauthorized use of such devices may lead to disciplinary action.

SSGTs PROPOSED/ NEW UCHS CELL PHONE POLICY:

1. No cell phone use during instruction time. Cell phones are to be Off, out –of-Sight, and not in Use (OSU). Students on bathroom passes are to adhere to the OSU guidelines as well.
2. A teacher has to ask for administrative approval in advance to allow their students access to their phones during an instructional period.
3. A student ambassador or star student (for a class) can have access to their phone should the teacher need to ask them they look up something for the class.
4. If a parent notifies an administrator in advance, a student may be granted an emergency pass for access to their phone for the day if the administrator determines an emergency clearance is warranted. The student will carry the clearance note with them and the administrator will let their teachers know about the clearance for the day.
5. If a phone is seen in class and the OSU rule is violated, the teacher is to request the phone from the student so that it can be turned over to an administrator. If a phone is taken from a student, the parent or guardian will need to come to school office to pick up their student's phone. If the student has already violated the OSU rule once before, the cell phone for the student will not be given back to the parent until 5 days have elapsed. If the student has already violated the OSU rule twice, the cell phone for the student will not be given back to the parent until 10 days have elapsed.
6. Should a student disagree with their OSU violation, they are still required to turn over their phone to the teacher, and then follow up with the administrator to share why they think they have not violated the school's OSU policy. The administrator will listen to the student, listen to the teacher, and then make a determination for whether there has been a violation of OSU rules.

Justification and Why the Need to Change the School Policy:

Current research and publications reveal the negative consequence of cell phone use for students. While not all students are demonstrating concerns with regards to physical and mental health symptoms, the research is showing that today's teens are generally overly dependent on their phone and are suffering from greater anxiety and

depression that can be tied to cell phone use. Some students (and adults as well), are obsessed with social media postings. Students have been found to check their phones anywhere between five to six times every hour - from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed.

The greatest concern held by SSGT members is with the number of times students are accessing their phones (and social media specifically) during class. This access is causing students to lose focus on what is being discussed and taught in class. It's simply a battle most all teachers are facing in their rooms. While SSGT realizes that this change in policy could cause some students to have cell phone "withdrawals", the rule being proposed is strictly for classroom use and not for passing periods or before and after school.