

Wendler Cell Phone Update



Mr. Wilson

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Hello Parents,

The team at Wendler Middle School has studied recent research that reveals the negative emotional and academic impact of cell phone presence during academic instruction. As a result, we have revised our 2023/2024 student cell phone policy. Students will be required to turn off and lock cell phones away in their lockers from 8:15-2:45. Our team is committed to providing a school culture that is focused on educating our students and it is clear that cell phones/devices are an ever present distraction from that goal. Below are some of the articles and research that have persuaded our team as well as Frequently Asked Questions about the revised policy. Please review and discuss with your student.

Frequently Asked Questions

We know you will have questions and we have tried to predict a few here, but as always feel free to call and talk directly with our Administration team for further clarification on the updated policy.

1. “What if I need to get in contact with my child during the school day?”

While it is certainly convenient and reassuring to text your student during the day, the cost of having immediate access is not worth the interruptions during the school day. If you must contact your child during their educational day please call the front office and we will gladly send them a message in between classes.

2. “What if there is a safety issue such as an Active Shooter situation or natural disaster, isn’t my child safer with a cell phone?”

No. Safety experts across the country report that during such a situation it is crucial for students to have their full attention on the present adult and not the distraction of texting friends or family. Notifications sounding and breaking the silence and concentration during such an event places a student at more risk, not less.

3. “Will restricting phone usage take away from my child’s opportunity to learn digital citizenship?”

That is a fair question. We are researching curriculum to provide direct instruction to students regarding the importance of digital citizenship and social media safety. In addition, we will offer opportunities throughout the school-year for parents to gain further information and guidance on how to establish safe media practices at home.

Further Reading

Our team did not make this decision lightly. Research and many frank conversations led to the decision. Please join us in the conversation and here are articles currently inspiring our team.

[Rutgers Study about Cell Phone use and Lower Grades](#)

[University of Chicago research on the mere presence of a phone limiting cognitive performance](#)

[Washington Post article on danger of cell phones during a major safety event](#)

[CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#)

[Psychologist Jonathan Haidt's article on social media being a cause of poor teen mental health](#)

[Atlantic article "Get Phones Out of Schools Now"](#)



We know that many of our returning 8th graders will have feelings about the change in the cell phone policy. In reality, this is not a change. Phones have always been expected to be Put Up and Away during the school day. However, the research is showing that even having a phone in a backpack, purse or pocket limits the potential learning and leads to distractions. Please support our team as we strive to provide the very best academic experience for your students.