

Cell Phone / Electronic Device Use Policy

Purpose/Rationale

There are both very good arguments for, and against, the use of cellphones/personal electronics in schools. In our efforts to deliver a relevant, future-focused and engaging experience at MRCS, we believe that web-based computing technology is an essential tool that teachers and students use to enhance their learning. We are committed to learning about and providing explicit instruction and modeling at school on how to use technology.

We know that the fostering of relationships in grace, love, and safety is essential to learning, and that socio-emotional, intelligence, interpersonal communication and collaborative problem-solving skills are critical 21st century competencies. Therefore, the school is best served by reducing distractions and barriers to relationships and learning by placing some limitations on how and when students use personal electronics. We are consistently working toward teaching ourselves and our students ethical and responsible use, and expect parents to partner with us in this.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, “Personal electronic devices” include cell phones, tablets, bluetooth headphones, smart watches, etc.

Overview

Students in K-8 may not use their personal devices during the school day.

The following are **non-instructional times** when students in Grades 9-12 are permitted to use their personal devices:

- Prior to the start of school (Up to 8:25 am)
- During lunch break (11:40 am - 12:20 pm)
- After school ends (3:00 pm)

Rationale:

- a. Students in all classes at MRCS have access to technology such as iPads and laptops when required for learning tasks and therefore do not require personal electronic devices to engage in meaningful learning

- b. Several years of educational research demonstrate that a student's concentration and self-regulation skills are stronger predictors of long-term success and wellness than other factors such as home environment.
- c. Cell phone access in classrooms is correlated with higher instances of inappropriate multitasking which we know leads to decreased cognitive function and efficiency when trying to complete tasks such as reading and writing, problem- solving, or peer-peer collaboration.
- d. The students who are most at risk for anxiety or learning and self-regulation challenges show significant gains in achievement in schools where there are consistent cell-phone regulation policies in place. The achievement of students who demonstrate strong self-regulation skills are not impacted by the presence of cell phones in schools, nor are they adversely affected by the absence of a personal phone while in school.

Policy

- a. Students at MRCS may bring cell phones / personal devices to school at their own risk but they must be turned off and placed in school bags or lockers where they are out of sight. The school assumes no risk for loss or theft of student cell phones.
- b. Students in K-8 may not use personal electronic devices for any reason during the school day, including breaks, or on any school- related trips. The school day is defined as 8:25am - 2:55 pm.
- c. Students in 9-12 may not use personal cell phones or personal devices during classes. Students may only use their personal cell phones / devices during lunch break (11:40-12:20) and before and after school.
- d. Students K-12 may not use a personal electronic device in any washroom, changeroom, etc.
- e. Administration may permit exemptions to the policy on a case-by-case basis where there are defensible educational reasons for personal device use in consultation with the parents.
- f. Expectations will be clearly shared with students and posted in clear view in classrooms and around the school

Consequences

- a. Students who are seen using their phone for any reason will be asked to deliver their phone to the front office where it will be held in a secure location for the remainder of the day
- b. The principal or one of the vice principals will contact parents/guardians for students who have had repeat occurrences

- c. For students who have had more than two incidents, their personal tech device will only be returned to parents
- d. Students who refuse to turn in their cell phones when requested will be subject to further disciplinary measures as outlined in the discipline policy