

Common Justifications for Cell Phone Policies

Below are common push backs we hear to why schools don't want to implement an away for the day cell phone policy. Please email us at info@screenagersmovie.com with others you've heard.

SCHOOLS DON'T WANT THE ENFORCEMENT BURDEN.

The reality is that when solid systems are in place middle schools are not overburdened. We've heard from dozens of schools who have changed their policies to be clear and direct and there seems to be little push back. One principal said she implemented a away for the day with clear consequences but she told the students that for the 1st month they would simply get a warning and then once they were more used to the new rules, the consequences would set in. Habit building takes time and this is a nice way to ease into a new policy.

PARENTS WANT TO REACH THEIR KIDS IN THE EVENT OF A SCHOOL LOCKDOWN.

In a recent [NPR story](#) a security expert explains why each student having a phone in a lockdown is not great:

“Ken Trump, the security expert, says phones can actually make us less safe in a crisis such as the one in Parkland. He ticks off several reasons:

1. Using phones can distract people from the actions they need to be taking in the moment, such as running, hiding and listening to directions from first responders.
2. The sound of the phone, whether ringing or on vibrate, could alert an assailant to a hiding place.
3. The shooter could be monitoring the event themselves on social media and find more victims or elude capture that way.
4. Victims and worried family members trying to get through can jam communications, interfering with first responders.”

KIDS WILL FEEL LESS STRESS IF THEY CAN CHECK ON THEIR TEXTS AND SOCIAL FEEDS.

Studies have shown that middle schoolers are at a higher risk of depression. Access to smartphones, texts, and social media magnifies the issues of inclusion and acceptance, issues most middle schoolers grapple with during the day. Face-to-face time with friends and classmates counteracts the isolating, depressive feelings that come up when looking at a screen. See more studies on the social emotional effects of cell phones on teens.

SCHOOLS BELIEVE THAT PARENTS WANT TO BE ABLE TO CONTACT THEIR CHILDREN ALL DAY

Our data shows this is not the case. More than 80% of parents do not want their kids to use cell phones during school. When parents help their kids plan their days without text messages, they help them to develop valuable executive-functioning skills.

SCHOOLS WANT THEIR STUDENTS TO USE THEIR PHONES AS A COMPUTER

It is better to just let them use a computer than to have a phone because the apps and notifications on the phone will constantly distract them. Also, non-sanctioned screen time on phones is much easier to sneak than doing so on a computer. Studies show that kids' academic performance actually goes down with the mere presence of a phone in class.

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE IT IS A NICE TOOL FOR INTROVERTED KIDS

When kids who are struggling with being social are allowed to retreat into their device between classes, they never get the ability to work on their communication skills.

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT STUDENTS SHOULD JUST CONTROL THEIR IMPULSES TO CHECK THEIR PHONES DURING THE SCHOOL DAY, WHY DO WE HAVE TO TAKE IT AWAY FROM THEM?

We know that the control center for impulse control, the frontal lobe, is not fully developed in middle school-aged children. When we say "kids just need to learn how to handle phone use in places like classrooms," we are setting many kids up for failure. We will help them more by giving them self-control challenges in which they can succeed.