

DECA Middle Cell Phone, Headphone, and Smartwatch Policy

Rationale:

During the 2020-2021 school year, DECA Middle saw a significant increase in the number of cell phone related disciplinary incidents at school. These incidents ranged from sneaking cell phone use during class, in the hallways, and in the restrooms, to social media related incidents. During the 2023-2024 school year, we saw a significant increase in the amount of wireless earbuds and smartwatches being worn by students. While some of these devices were not directly connected to student cell phones, they contributed to disengagement in class. We know from scientific research and practical experience that cell phone use in school is bad for students: it increases disciplinary incidents, decreases connection and social skills, and distracts students from their studies. Our cell phone policy, *which will be extended to headphones and smartwatches*, will focus on proactive steps to allow for increased focus, connection, clearing the path for reduction in cell phone related discipline, and recouping time lost on cell phone related issues. Simply put, we cannot do what we say we want to do while competing with cell phone use.

Cell Phone Policy:

Students at DECA Middle may not be in possession of their cell phones during the school day. Students may either:

1. Leave their cell phone at home
2. Turn their cell phone into the classroom lockbox in their advisory upon arrival each morning

If a student is found to be in possession of his/her/their cell phone during the school day, they will be out of compliance with the cell phone policy.

Sequence of Response for Non-Compliance with Cell Phone Policy:

If a student has his/her/their cell phone during the school day, the following steps will be taken:

1. Office referral for having a cell phone during school hours.
2. Administrators will take the cell phone and store it in the main office until a parent/guardian comes to pick up the phone and meet with an administrator to review the cell phone policy and discuss next steps for further cell phone issues.

Beyond an initial parent conference, further issues will result in the following disciplinary action:

1. Cell phones will be locked in the administrator's office for 20 school days. After 20 days it can be picked up by a parent or guardian.

Headphone and Smartwatch Policy:

Headphones and smart watches may not be used during the school day, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher. Students are permitted to bring both items to school, and encouraged to have headphones, but are not permitted to use them unless connected to a school activity. Use of these devices includes, but is not limited to, actively attending to the device, having the device in your ears while in the hallway, or having sound audibly coming from the device.

Sequence of Response for Non-Compliance with the Headphone and Smartwatch Policy:

If a student is found using either of these devices without the explicit permission of a teacher for a classroom activity, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher will ask the student for the device and the student is expected to provide the device without argument.
2. The device will be sent to Mrs. McNichols at the main office.
3. A parent or guardian can collect the device from the main office.
4. Subsequent violations of the policy will result in the same procedure.

Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I get in touch with my student(s) during school hours?

If you need to reach your child during school hours, contact the main office at DECA Middle at (937) 528-6808.

When is my child permitted to be on their cell phone at school?

Cell phones must be turned into the classroom lock box upon arrival at school in the morning. Late students will turn in their phones to the front office if arriving after an advisory. Students may pick up their phones at dismissal. After picking up their phones at the end of the school day, students may use their cell phones to contact rides and communicate with parents.

What happens if a student has his/her/their cell phone with them during school?

If a student has their cell phone with them during the school day, they will receive an office referral and be required to turn their cell phone into an administrator. A parent or guardian must come to pick up the cell phone; phones will not be returned to the student. Upon pick up of the cell phone, parents will meet with an administrator to review the cell phone policy and sign a cell phone policy agreement. Further instances beyond the cell phone conference with an administrator will result in a 20 day cell phone confiscation.

What happens if there is an emergency and I need to get in contact with my student?

If you need to get in contact with your student in an emergency situation, please contact the front office of DECA Middle at (937) 528-6808. In extreme circumstances, it would be appropriate to contact an advisor or administrator.

Where will the cell phones be stored during the school day?

Each classroom will have a wall mounted lock box where cell phones will be stored during the school day. Students will have an assigned slot to put their phones into, and the box will be locked by the advisor during advisory each day. Therefore, all student cell phones will remain daily in their advisories.