

Cell Phone Procedure - Parent FAQs

Introduction:

To minimize distractions, enhance educational outcomes, and optimize engagement, the use of cell phones and earbuds in classrooms will not be permitted during the 2024-25 school year unless students are explicitly permitted by the classroom teacher for educational or instructional purposes. Cell phones are allowed during unstructured/non-academic time in common spaces before and after school, during passing periods, during study hall (at the discretion of the teacher) and in the hallways, cafeteria, and library.

You will find a series of frequently asked questions below that explain and support the rationale behind our decision to implement this cell phone procedure. This procedure is supported by [research](#) and we believe it will help minimize distractions, enhance educational outcomes, and optimize engagement among our students. Additionally, we believe that it will positively impact students' social and emotional well-being within the learning environment.

You may use the bookmarks to skip to a specific section or question.

<u>Rationale</u>	<u>Administrative Support</u>
Why are we adopting a new cell phone procedure?	How are teachers being supported in implementing the cell phone procedure?
Why can't the cell phone procedure be teacher discretion?	Is the student handbook aligned with this procedure?
Is this the best cell phone procedure to enforce in a school?	What if the procedure is not effective?

Parent/Guardian Questions and Concerns

- [When and how will this procedure be communicated to current and incoming students and families?](#)
- [What will this procedure look like in the classroom?](#)
- [What if someone takes my student's phone by accident?](#)
- [Can my student keep their phone in their pocket or backpack and still be in compliance with this rule?](#)
- [How will I be able to communicate with my student during the day?](#)
- [What if I have to communicate a time-sensitive issue to my student?](#)
- [When will my student be allowed to use their phone during the school day?](#)
- [Can teachers allow students to use cell phones during class?](#)
- [Are there consequences for non-compliant students?](#)
- [Can parents/guardians opt out of this classroom expectation?](#)
- [Will my student be able to keep their phone near them or handy for medical reasons?](#)
- [What if there is a fire drill, fire alarm, or other evacuation/emergency situation?](#)
- [Does this expectation include other electronic devices such as earbuds and smart watches?](#)

Rationale

Why are we adopting a new cell phone procedure?

Establishing a classroom environment free from cell phone use is in alignment with best practices in education today. [Research](#) shows the negative correlation between cell phone use in schools and students' academic achievement as well as their social and emotional well-being. By adopting this procedure, we believe we will optimize students' engagement and learning opportunities in school. Members of the LTHS administrative team have collaborated with the Lyons Township Education Association (LTEA) meeting in developing these procedures.

Why can't the cell phone procedure be teacher discretion?

Prior to the 2024-25 school year, teachers were allowed to use their discretion in dealing with students who used their cell phones during class. Unfortunately, this created inconsistent practices among teachers and confusion among students. A defined cell phone procedure will provide clarity to students about the expectations for them with regard to cell phones in the classroom. It will also help teachers manage this issue with clear classroom norms and procedures to follow if a student violates the procedure.

Is this the best cell phone procedure to enforce in a school?

Every cell phone procedure has advantages and disadvantages. We believe this procedure is a step in the right direction because it optimizes instructional time for students in the classroom and provides teachers with ways to better manage an issue that can negatively impact all students in the learning environment.

Administrative Support

How are teachers being supported in implementing the cell phone procedure?

Cell phone pouches have been purchased for teachers who wish to utilize them to enforce the cell phone procedure. A progressive discipline process has also been created to help manage issues in an effective and efficient manner. Division Chairs and Assistant Principals are available to support teachers in implementing classroom procedures.

Is the Student Handbook aligned with this procedure?

Yes, the [Student Handbook](#) is aligned with the cell phone procedure.

What if the procedure is not effective?

As reflective practitioners, we are always looking for ways to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for our students. We will consistently evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure to determine if and when an adjustment to the procedure should be made.

Parent/Guardian Questions and Concerns

When and how will this procedure be communicated to current and incoming students and families?

This procedure will be new for returning students who may have become accustomed to it being a teacher's

discretion on how to deal with cell phones in the classroom. Communication will occur in the following ways:

- Beginning of the year communication from the principal to students and families
- Teachers sharing language and classroom procedures with students at the beginning of the year
- Consistent language used within class syllabi
- Communication about the procedure from assistant principals in their AP Talks
- Assistant principals will be available and willing to visit classes to support teachers proactively and in response to issues

What will this procedure look like in the classroom?

Teachers will share their classroom cell phone procedure, specifying where students are expected to store their phones ([pouches](#), backpacks, etc.) and will review classroom expectations. With phones silenced and put away, we expect the learning environment to be free of distractions, allowing student engagement to increase.

What if someone takes my student's phone by accident?

We acknowledge the concerns that come along with a procedure that may require students to put their phones in [pouches](#). However, we do not anticipate a student taking another student's phone by accident to be a widespread issue. In the event that this does happen, the student should let their teacher and/or assistant principal know immediately. It is likely that a phone taken by accident will be returned to the classroom teacher, who can give it to the owner of the phone. To avoid such a situation, we strongly recommend that students label their phones with their names. Parents who have serious concerns about their student's phone going missing can also choose not to send their students to school with a phone.

Can my student keep their phone in their pocket or backpack and still be in compliance with this rule?

It depends on how a teacher chooses to enforce the procedure. Some teachers may require students to turn their phones in at the beginning of the class period where others may enforce a procedure that requires students to silence their phones and put them in their backpacks. Students should abide by the requests of the classroom teacher to avoid any cell phone issues.

How will I be able to communicate with my student during the day?

Students will still have access to their phones during the school day. Cell phones are allowed during unstructured time in common spaces such as before/after school, during passing periods, and in the hallways, cafeteria, and library. Parents and students can communicate during these times. We recognize that parents and students may need to communicate with each other during the school day, but our goal is to minimize distractions in the classroom and optimize student learning and engagement.

What if I have to communicate a time-sensitive issue to my student?

If you need to reach your student urgently, please call the Attendance Office. In an emergency situation, our staff will ensure that your message is delivered to your child as quickly as possible. This approach allows us to maintain an environment conducive to learning while still ensuring that you can communicate important information to your student when necessary.

When will my student be allowed to use their phone during the school day?

Cell phones are allowed during unstructured/non-academic time in common spaces before and after school, during passing periods, during study hall (at the discretion of the teacher) and in the hallways, cafeteria, and library.

Please note that cell phones are not allowed in restrooms, locker rooms, Assistant Principals' Office, Student Services Office, Counseling Office, and the Health Office.

Can teachers allow students to use cell phones during class?

Our policy aims to strike a balance between leveraging technology for educational purposes and minimizing distractions. Teachers may allow students to use their cell phones during class for specific educational activities.

Are there consequences for non-compliant students?

Yes, there is a progressive discipline chart below that ensures students are receiving consistent discipline school wide.

Offense	Disciplinary Action
1	Student has conversation with teacher
2	Teacher contacts parent to make aware of issue
3	Student conference with assistant principal Assistant principal contacts parent
4	Cell phone and/or earbuds turned in to Assistant Principal's Office for one day
5	Cell phone and/or earbuds turned in to Assistant Principal's Office for one week
6	Cell phone and/or earbuds turned in to Assistant Principal's Office for two weeks
7	Cell phone and/or earbuds turned in to Assistant Principal's Office for three weeks

Can parents/guardians opt out of this classroom expectation?

No, an opt-out provision does not exist for this classroom expectation. We appreciate parents' support of this procedure and hope all families understand the great academic, social, and emotional benefits that can come from enforcing it.

Will my student be able to keep their phone near them or handy for medical reasons?

Yes. Teachers are legally obligated to follow all accommodations outlined by a student's 504 plan or IEP.

What if there is an emergency situation?

During such events, our primary focus is on the safety and swift evacuation of all students and staff. Per the [National School Safety and Security Offices](#), cell phone use during evacuation and emergency situations can negatively impact school safety. Therefore, cell phone use is discouraged during these situations.

Does this expectation include other electronic devices such as earbuds and smart watches?

The expectation is that cell phones be put away (in the manner of a teacher's choosing) and that earbuds be removed upon entering the classroom. Earbuds should be stored on the student's person or in a backpack. Smart watches can be worn, but should not be used.