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August 13, 2024

Dear Families & Staff,

I trust that you had an enjoyable summer, making memorable moments outdoors, and that you were able to spend some time free from the distractions of your cell phones and mobile devices. I would like to share the details of our important new Personal Mobile Device Plan Guidelines for grades PK-8 that will be implemented at the start of the school year.

Our administration and faculty agree with the growing consensus supported by research that underscores the substantial impact of personal mobile devices (namely cell phones and Smartwatches), which utilize applications that significantly distract students from the learning and social connection that are fundamental to their education. Moreover, these devices have been shown to significantly influence the social, emotional, and mental health/wellness of our youth. In response, a PK-8 District Personal Mobile Device Plan was developed with guidelines to cultivate a safe and focused learning atmosphere, free from distractions. The Plan's guidelines were discussed at the [May 28th Board of Education Meeting](#) and again at the July 23 Board Summer Retreat. The guidelines pertain to all devices, such as cell phones, ear pods, and Smartwatches.

The use of personal mobile devices by students in grades PK-8 is prohibited. At the elementary schools, if families elect to allow their child to carry a personal mobile device for an identified purpose, the device must remain powered off, silenced and stored in the child's backpack throughout the school day, including while riding the bus. At MMS, if families elect to allow their child to carry a personal mobile device for an identified purpose, the device must remain powered off, silenced and stored in the locker throughout the school day. Any device that is not powered off, silenced and stored away will be confiscated; parents will be required to pick up any confiscated personal mobile devices at the end of the school day. At DHS, we continue to evaluate our device policy and plan to provide an update in the coming months.

Our [District website](#) provides a full description of the new guidance documents for elementary and middle school students as well as frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs). We will communicate and discuss these practices with students during the first three days of school (August 28-30). Full implementation will start on Tuesday, September 3rd. The new guidelines for personal mobile devices will be discussed with parents at PTO meetings and Open Houses. In early October, parents and staff will be surveyed to solicit feedback on the Plan's implementation. A community wide parent technology workshop will also be provided in the fall.

As with all school policies, these guidelines require the active support of our parents. Please discuss this new policy with your child(ren) and have conversations with your child(ren) about responsible cell phone and Smartwatch use. We encourage you to monitor and model your child's cell phone use.

The vast benefits of technology are experienced when users are aware, informed, and responsible. I am grateful to the administration and faculty for their thoughtful policy review regarding personal mobile devices. Thank you for your anticipated support and partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan Addley".

Alan Addley, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools