



Entiat School District Implementing a New Cellphone Policy

Our commitment to the patrons of the Entiat School District is to provide an environment that is safe for all students and allows them to reach their highest potential. As part of this commitment to learning as well as the health and wellbeing of our students, we will implement a new cellphone policy starting in the 2024- 25 school year. This policy, which applies to students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, will restrict cellphone use during school hours to foster a more conducive learning environment.

The “WHY” Behind the Policy Change

We are implementing this policy due to many factors, a few of which are listed below:

- **It’s the Right Thing to Do:** The research and evidence is quite clear that the use of smart phones and social media is having a detrimental effect on our young people. Knowing this, we can no longer avoid addressing this in an aggressive manner.
- **Enhancing Academic Focus:** Research indicates that cellphones can be a significant distraction in the classroom. By removing cellphones, students can better concentrate on their studies, leading to improved academic performance and a more engaging educational experience.
- **Promoting Social Interaction:** Schools are crucial settings for social development. Without the constant distraction of cellphones, students are more likely to engage in face-to-face interactions, thereby building essential social skills and forming stronger relationships with their peers.
- **Addressing Mental Health Concerns:** Insights from Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation*, highlight the link between excessive smartphone use and increased anxiety and depression among young people. Limiting cellphone use during school hours aims to mitigate these risks and promote a healthier school environment.
- **Ensuring Safety and Well-being:** While cellphones can facilitate communication, they also pose risks such as cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content. Despite previous efforts to manage cellphone use with an "out-of-sight" approach, compliance was insufficient. The new policy aims to create a safer and more secure environment for all students.
- **Preventing Unauthorized Recordings:** It is not uncommon for students to take videos and pictures in classrooms and bathrooms without permission, posting them on social media. This invasion of privacy is unacceptable and harmful.
- **Reducing Social Conflicts:** Many conflicts occur during school hours due to students communicating through texting and social media. This policy will help reduce

misunderstandings and conflicts that arise from digital communication.

- **Combating Bullying and Harassment:** Bullying and harassment at school have been perpetuated through cellphones and social media. Additionally, pornography has been shared among students, creating a hostile environment.
- **Preventing Academic Dishonesty:** Cellphones enable cheating by allowing students to take pictures of tests and assignments. Restricting their use upholds academic integrity.
- **Mitigating Social Media Challenges:** Platforms like TikTok have popularized "TikTok Challenges" that students sometimes participate in at school, often leading to significant damage and even injury to staff and students. These actions, often captured in photos or videos, have resulted in hundreds of dollars in damage.

Addressing Parental Concerns

The district recognizes that cellphones have become an integral part of daily life and understands that parents may have concerns about reaching their children during school hours. Parents can always contact the school office, where staff will promptly relay messages to students.

Additionally, each classroom is equipped with a staff phone capable of making outside calls in case of emergencies. By working together, the Entiat School District community can create a positive and productive learning environment where all students thrive. The district is confident that this policy will help students develop healthier habits, reduce anxiety, and focus more on their education, ultimately preparing them to reach their highest potential.

Implementation Details

- **Device Storage:** Students must keep their cellphones turned off and stored in their locker during school hours. Elementary students will keep their devices turned off and in their backpack.
- **Authorized Use:** Cellphones may only be used before and after the school day unless specifically authorized by a school administrator.
- **Consequences for Unauthorized Use:** If a student violates our policy without proper authorization, the device will be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day. Disciplinary action is clearly laid out in our discipline matrix.
- **Search and Confiscation:** School officials may search a device if there is reasonable suspicion of misuse, with the device being returned only to the student's parent or guardian.
- **More Information to Come:** Additional information regarding the implementation of this policy will be provided to parents.