

POLICY CONCERNING CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONICS

Dear Parents and Students,

Please note the following revisions in our policy concerning cell phones and electronic devices. It is important that you read this entire document carefully, *including the reasons for the changes and the penalties* for breaking these rules. This policy goes into effect immediately.

Radios; IPODs; IPHONES; electronic games; beepers; pagers; cell phones; laser pointers; audio tapes; CDs; DVDs; MP-3s; tape, disc, or other music or video players; electronic games; cameras; and other such devices **are not permitted** on a student's person, in lockers, pocketbooks, book bags, or anywhere else accessible to the student during the school day. ***Students who have cell phones or any of the other items listed must check them into the school office during school hours. (Students may no longer leave them in their cars during school. No student is allowed to visit their car at all during the day unless permission is given by the school office.)*** Cell phones may be used after 3:30 p.m. to make necessary calls, e.g., to arrange for transportation, coordinate schedule changes with parents, etc. However, if the student remains in after-school care, he or she must turn in their devices to the day care teacher. Any violation of this policy will result in the confiscation of cell phone, which will only be returned to the student's *parent* by an administrator.

REASONS:

- Nearly all the students' cell phones have internet capability. According to the Christian Law Association, an international law firm, this has become a serious problem, even in Christian schools; and the schools must be proactive in protecting their ministries from misuse of the internet by their students, especially (but not necessarily exclusively) while at school. While this is only one facet of cell phone abuse, it's an extremely important one. Misuse of the internet can include viewing of inappropriate website; downloading inappropriate materials (including music); posting to social networking sites; emailing inflammatory messages intended to hurt or harm the reputation of the school, its staff, other students; *ad infinitum*.
- Today's students are remarkably adept at using their cell phones – and sometimes other devices, as well – without even looking. They can text and even surf the web while the phone is in their pockets, handbags, or under a book or papers on their desks. They can text answers to tests or seatwork assignments to each other, or simply communicate during class, without a teacher ever seeing them.

- Possible cell phone activity, actually seen in some schools, have included “sexting,” sending inappropriate messages or pictures, playing games, threatening and bullying, setting up fights or drug deals, perpetrating hoaxes, etc.
- Most cell phones and some other devices are capable of taking pictures. Students thus have the capability of taking inappropriate pictures of unwitting classmates or teachers.
- Students, in all innocence, may take pictures or record video of other students and/or teachers at school and post them on Facebook or other social networking sites. This can pose a serious risk to students’ safety, as in the case of internet stalkers. As if that isn’t bad enough, it then becomes a serious liability threat to the school, parents, and students.

PENALTIES:

For all these reasons, we are increasing the penalties for breaking the rules against this policy.

- The first offense will result in 25 demerits and confiscation of the device, which will be returned to the **parent** by a school administrator or someone designated by him at the end of the school day.
- The second offense will result in 50 demerits, a one-day suspension from school, and confiscation of the device, which will be returned to the **parent** at the end of the 9-week grading period.
- A third offense will result in 75 demerits, a 3-day suspension from school, and confiscation of the device, which will be returned to the **parent** at the end of the school year.

Charles Garrison, Jr.
Administrator