

CELL PHONES and ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell Phones

Cell phones are a convenient tool for communication used by nearly everyone in America today. Yet in schools they can be a serious distraction to learning and a means by which students may do things that are potentially injurious to themselves, their families, and the school. Texting, visiting inappropriate internet sites, and taking pictures and videos that invade privacy and bring embarrassment or legal trouble to families or the school—all make the unsupervised use of cell phones in school a problem. This is particularly true for younger students who have not yet learned how to responsibly manage this technology. Furthermore, current studies confirm a strong negative relationship between cell phone use and academic performance among students.

To ensure that cell phones are used only in appropriate ways by students at Ascension Academy, the following policies are enforced during the academic year:

- Middle school students *may not use* their cell phones anywhere in the building from 7:50am to 3:44pm. This includes during passage in the hallways, in commons areas, the gym, cafeteria, LRC, bathrooms, and locker rooms. Teachers may permit students to use cell phones only as a tool for academic purposes, and only then with permission and under the teacher's supervision. Middle school students who violate this policy, whose phones go off during the day, or who call or text parents during the day will have their phones confiscated by the teachers who will give them to the dean.
- High school students *may have cell phones* but may not use them during academic classes without permission from the teacher teaching that class. Freshmen and sophomores may use their phones before school, during lunch, and after school.
- At no time are cell phones or devices accessed for entertainment in the LRC by either middle school or high school students.
- Any student who violates or abuses this cell phone policy shall have his or her phone confiscated by the school and turned over to the dean who keeps all phones collected from students until the student redeems the phone at a cost of \$25 for the first incident and \$50 for each subsequent incident. Repeat offenders are subject to no-use penalties that could result in the loss of cell phone privilege at school functions.

Electronic Devices (and other distractions)

While electronic devices may enhance communication between students, their families, and friends, students who make use of them during the school day often lose valuable time that should be used for study, reflection, and face-to-face interactions with faculty and peers. Ascension Academy continues to examine community norms to balance evolving technology applications with traditional school norms. To that end, the school reserves the right to revise its electronic devices policy at any time. Currently, students are not allowed to have an electronic device openly displayed or turned on during the school day. Students who need to contact their parents or guardian may come to the office and are allowed to use the phone.

Students are not permitted to possess or use the items listed below during school hours while on school property unless so directed or required by a teacher:

- Gameboys,
- dice,
- playing cards,
- trading cards (sport and celebrity),
- paging devices,
- chains,
- guns,
- knives,
- lighters,
- laser pointers,
- any type of spray device, and
- materials containing gang or graffiti-type writings.

Disallowed items are confiscated and students are disciplined according to the policy on Conduct and Discipline. The administration reserves the right to disallow other items which might present a distraction to the learning process and have a negative impact on the environment of the campus. The school restricts the use of such devices to times before or after school or as permitted in special situations by a teacher during a class or activity. On school trips, the trip sponsors set the procedure as to what items are allowed to be used by the students.