Center High School's Cell Phone Policy

At Center High School, our top priority is creating a focused, supportive, and equitable learning environment where every student can thrive. In response to growing research showing the negative academic and mental health impacts of cell phone use during the school day, we are implementing a clear and consistent cell phone policy.

Beginning Monday, October 27th:

Students cell phones, smartwatches, or other devices with the ability to call, access apps, or text, will NOT be allowed on CCSD Campus during the school day (7:42am – 4:00pm). Students with medical conditions that require electronic monitoring will have the ability to use or access these devices in accordance with their medical plan.

This policy is designed to minimize distractions, protect instructional time, and foster stronger in-person connections among students. By setting boundaries around phone use, we aim to help students engage more fully in learning, improve their well-being, and prepare for success beyond high school.

Why is Center High School banning cell phone use during the school day?
Research from the *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)* and the *U.S. Surgeon General* shows that phones in school are a major distraction, reduce learning, and negatively impact student mental health. By keeping phones away during class, we protect learning time, reduce stress, and encourage students to build face-to-face relationships.

How will this help my student?

- Fewer distractions → better focus and learning
- Less stress from social media during the day
- Stronger face-to-face peer connections
- Safer emergency responses

What happens if my child doesn't follow the policy?
We use a **progressive response**:

1st Offense - Device held in the office until the end of the day
2nd Offense - Parent picks up phone at the end of the day
Repeated violations will be considered insubordination/detrimental behavior

Our goal isn't punishment—it's consistency, fairness, and keeping school a place for learning.

Parent FAQs

Can I still reach my child if I need to?
Yes! The quickest way to reach your child is by **calling the main office** at 719-754-2232. We will make sure your child gets your message right away. Students who are feeling ill may always be evaluated in the health office, where staff can assist them in calling home if necessary.

What if there's an emergency at school?
In an emergency, the safest thing for students is to **follow staff directions immediately**. Student phone use during emergencies can create confusion, spread misinformation, and slow down safety procedures. The school and district will notify families through our **official communication system** (Thrillshare) as soon as information is available.

What about special situations (medical needs, emergencies, IEP/504 plans)?
We will always honor medical or documented disability needs. Please contact the school if your child has a plan that requires special access to a cell phone.

Research Says: Cell phones significantly reduce academic focus and achievement, especially for the students who most need support!

- **Distraction and learning loss:** The *Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*'s 2024 analysis of the *Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)* shows that students distracted by phones—whether their own or their peers'—perform markedly worse in math. This effect is consistent across many countries, not just the U.S.
- **Equity impact:** Beland & Murphy (2016) found that when English schools banned phones, student test scores rose—**with the largest gains for lower-achieving and disadvantaged students.** In other words, bans help close achievement gaps.
- **Mental health and wellbeing:** The U.S. *Surgeon General's Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health* (2023, updated 2025) highlights that heavy social media/device use during the school day increases risks for anxiety, depression, and sleep disruption. Removing phones during school provides protected time for focus and in-person relationships.
- **Attention restoration:** Experimental research (2025) shows that when phones are simply present—even unused— students' attention and working memory are diminished. Schools that remove access altogether see stronger sustained attention in class.

Put simply: **phones in pockets mean divided minds.** A no-phones policy removes the single greatest source of everyday distraction in classrooms, thereby protecting instructional time, promoting equity for struggling learners, and safeguarding student mental health.

We appreciate your support! This policy helps us create a safe, focused, and welcoming learning environment for all students.