Cell Phones & Electronic Devices

Dear Hatfield Families,

As the holiday season approaches, several students may be gifted an electronic device, such as a cell phone. Some parents believe that phone ownership enhances their child’s safety, since they are constantly within a moment’s reach. For students who have a phone, please recognize that it is a privilege. They must keep the device off and in their bookbags during the school day. Parents may reach their child at any time by calling the school. With that, students are also able to call a parent/guardian upon request from a school phone/line.

Guidelines for cell phones/electronic devices will be enforced at Hatfield. Likewise, when Chromebooks are used in class, they are to be utilized for instructional purposes only. Our staff will deliver some upcoming digital citizenship instruction aimed to reinforce previous years’ lessons regarding online responsibility that encompasses both communication and etiquette. Coupled with that, I will personally review the policy in classrooms alongside some of our older grade levels.

By virtue of clear boundaries, we respect the educational rights of our peers. Once a student enters the building, and up until exiting the school, cell phones may not be used. These rules extend to those riding a bus to-and-from school. Those unable to follow such protocol are subject to signing a behavioral contract pertaining to phone use. As noted within the North Penn Elementary School Handbook, “Know that schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices. Personal electronic devices may be confiscated at any time if their usage does not comply with the guidelines above.”

Students are encouraged to report any behavior that makes them uncomfortable, especially students using a cell phone to photograph and/or record. Note, they should not actively take part in said photos or videos either. More so, parents can be held liable for content uploaded online. A social media network’s privacy settings represent a minor safeguard for kids, so it is best to remain vigilant about what students are accessing and take an active role in monitoring all electronic devices. Ultimately, teaching digital literacy empowers students with the knowledge necessary to use technological means to their benefit.

Per the North Penn Elementary School Handbook,

- “Students are not permitted to use cell phones during the elementary school instructional day unless a request is received from the student’s parent/guardian and approved by the superintendent or his/her designee.

- If a student possesses a cell phone, the device must be stored in the student’s backpack at all times and turned off.

- Students are prohibited at all times from using camera phones or any videotaping device to photograph, capture an image of or videotape another student or staff member on school grounds without the individual’s knowledge and expressed consent.

- Students may use a personal tablet or personal music player. The personal tablet or personal music player may only be used for instruction purposes with permission from the classroom teacher. Devices may only be used for purposes that do not require connection to the district network.”

Please be sure to review these cell phone and Chromebook responsibilities with your child.

Keep soaring above and beyond.

Wes Heinel

Principal