

FAQ – La Mesa Personal Device Policy

What is the rationale for students not having access to their phones and devices during lunch and passing periods?

- Social-emotional health
 - Encouraging students to grow socially by interacting with their peers and engaging without distraction.
 - Getting rid of the urge for students to constantly check their phone instead of having their undivided attention on learning. Part of that learning is appropriate socializing
- Cyber-bullying
 - Eliminating the opportunity for students to have pictures and videos taken of them by other students without their permission.
 - Limiting/eliminating the opportunity for students to text, message, or post things on social media during the school day that are hurtful to others.
- Eliminating student access to inappropriate content during the school day.
- Eliminating a cause of students being tardy to class.

Why are you punishing students who act responsibly with their electronic devices?

- While part of the rationale includes limiting activities that result in negative and inappropriate behavior, nothing in this policy is intended as a punishment. We want students focused on learning. Part of that learning includes social interactions. Student electronic use impedes social development and academic progress.

Brunch and lunch breaks are their free time. Why can't they be permitted to use it as they wish just like in the workplace?

- As a school we have a responsibility to protect students while they are on campus. We are charged with keeping them safe and protecting their privacy. Free access to the World Wide Web during breaks compromises our ability to protect their privacy and the accessing of inappropriate content. Free access also allows them to be bullied while at school through the device.
- Students are not adults. There are many things adults can do that students can not, such as drive a car and use tobacco products.

How can I get a message to my child?

- You are welcome to call the main office at (661)250-0022. We have office assistants who can deliver a message.

Will my child be able to use their cell phone in an emergency?

- Absolutely. We have not banned cell phones from campus, just required they be in the backpack in the off position while on campus. Since their backpack remains with them, they could access the phone in an emergency. An emergency would not be a situation like forgetting homework or lunch. In these cases a student can access a classroom phone with teacher permission or an office phone to contact parents. If they are in danger they may of course access their phone.

What if I need to text my child something important during the day?

- You are welcome to call the main office at (661)250-0022. We have office assistants who can deliver the message to your child. You are welcome to still text them knowing they will get the

message at 3:10 pm when they can access their phones again. You can also send your child an email as they may have opportunities to check email during the day using classroom Chromebooks or in the library during breaks.

How do I reach my child for a personal emergency?

- ☐ You are welcome to call the main office at (661)250-0022. We have office assistants or campus supervisors (depending on the sensitivity of the message), who can deliver a message.

I want my child to have his/her cell phone with them at all times.

- ☐ All students may keep phones in their backpacks, which are with them throughout the school day.
- ☐ Students with a documented need to have their phone on them from a licensed professional will be permitted to use it under the prescribed circumstances.

Can there be a designated time during the school day for students to check their phones, such as the last few minutes of class?

- ☐ Every minute of classroom instructional time is precious. One of the purposes of this policy is to gain back the instructional time being lost. We also do not want students accessing information during the school day that may be upsetting and further distract them from the primary goal of learning.

When can a student access his/her cell personal device in school?

- ☐ Upon entering the school gates, phones and devices must be placed in the off position and stored in the backpack. They can be accessed again once they exit the gate after the 3:10 pm dismissal.
- ☐ Occasionally, teachers may have an instruction purpose for allowing students to use their personal device during the class. Teachers will direct students as needed.

What is the progressive discipline model for students who violate the policy?

1st Offense - Student can pick up his/her device in the office after 3:10 pm.

2nd Offense - Student can pick up his/her device in the office after 3:10 pm and parent notification is made by office staff.

3rd Offense - Parent or parent designee over 18 years old must pick up the device in the office anytime while the office is open.

4th Offense - Brunch detention. Parent or parent designee over 18 years old must pick up the device in the office.

5th Offense - Lunch detention. Parent or parent designee over 18 years old must pick up the device in the office.

6th Offense - Brunch and Lunch detentions to complete a research assignment and presentation regarding the impact of cell phone/personal device use on learning (amount of time will be until the project is complete). Parent or parent designee over 18 years old must pick up the phone in the office.

***Any personal device usage that is determined to have taken place during school hours, even after the fact, will be enforced by the progressive discipline model.

What if I can't get to the school to pick up the phone that was confiscated?

- Parents can send another adult, 18 years or older, to pick up the personal device from the main office. The device will not be given back to the student on the 3rd ti or the time for the same infraction. (See progressive discipline model)

How will you handle students who refuse to hand over their device when they have violated the policy?

- A student who refuses to follow the direction of a valid school authority (administrator, teacher, campus supervisor) in enforcing the policies and procedures of the school is violating section 48900 (k) of the California Education Code and will be subject to discipline that could include suspension. We will continue to build positive relationships with students to ensure their compliance when a violation of the personal device policy happens.

What if another student accesses my child's cell phone or personal device during school hours?

- Students are responsible for what belongs to them. The student who used the cell phone or device and the student whose cell phone or device was used would both be in violation of the personal device policy and be subject to the progressive discipline model. Of course if it was determined another student went into the backpack without permission, appropriate consequences would be given.

What if my child has a documented medical need requiring they have a cell phone on them?

- A student who has a health plan on file with the school nurse stating that a cell phone is used to monitor a diagnosed health need is a legitimate reason for a student to have their phone on them at all times. Please consult with our school nurse if your child falls into this category. The nurse will make sure all appropriate staff are aware of the documented need. Students who have this accommodation and use their device for any other purpose will follow a similar progressive disciplinary plan.

What is defined as using a cell phone or personal device?

- Any viewing or use of a cell phone or personal device between the time a student enters the campus gates and leaves the campus gates. It is important that students understand not to put themselves in the position of a staff member suspecting them of viewing their phone. It is one thing for a student to accidentally have it fall out of their backpack, pick it up, and place it back in the backpack. This is different than a student who appears to be or is actually using it. Long story short...don't put yourself in a position where it looks like you are using it. Students who put it away when entering the gates during the day, and don't access it until after 3:10 pm outside the gates will have no issues with this policy.

You will never be able to fully enforce this policy. Why bother?

- Most students follow the rules when clear expectations and consistent accountability are present.
- If 100% enforcement was the criteria for having any policy we would have a rule-free school. Despite our best efforts, students still vape, cut class, cheat, and break other school rules that are in place to protect students. However, this is a very small portion of our student body.

- School policies that are supported and reinforced by parents have the best chance at being successfully implemented.

What if the cell phone is stolen?

- The William S. Hart Union High School District and La Mesa Junior High School are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices brought to school. Students are permitted to keep cell phones in their backpacks, but they maintain responsibility for the security of their backpacks.

What devices fall under this policy?

- Cell phones, smart watches, gaming devices, tablets, any device that can act like a cell phone with text and online features or that connects to the internet or cellular service.
 - We have everything students need to complete their work in the school.

How can I reach my child who is involved in activities on campus once the office is closed?

- Students may access their phones, under teacher direction, during activities after school and on field trips to facilitate parent-student communication.
- Students will be permitted to have their phones during events such as school dances to facilitate parent-student communication. Appropriate use of the device is expected.

Cell phones can be an incredible learning tool in the classroom. Aren't students missing out on an opportunity?

- We agree that technology is a great learning tool. All of our classrooms have class sets of Chromebooks for teachers to use for learning activities that involve technology. We also have a computer lab that houses enough desktop computers for a full class to use.
- Because we are not banning cell phones from campus, occasionally teachers may design lessons that utilize cell phones while in the classroom. Teachers are empowered to make these instructional decisions at La Mesa.

Isn't it helpful when students take recorded evidence of situations?

- It is not legal for students to record others in classrooms without their permission. (CA Ed Code 78907 and 51512)
- When students choose to record others in conflict they are choosing not to intervene to help or go to get an adult to help.
- When this footage is posted, it creates more conflict and drama that further disrupts school.
- Usually only portions of a conflict are recorded. This is problematic as we need to investigate and deal with what led up to the conflict. The piece recorded can often be misleading.

