August 28, 2018

The Question: Cell Phone Policy

*I would like to know what the cell phone policy is at each school.  Mostly interested in residential policy, but also for the school day too as my role covers both shifts.  We are in the process of drafting a new cell phone use policy and am curious as to what other schools for the deaf have set up.*

–Scott Gentzke, Ed.S, *Dean of Students & Director of Residential Services,* St. Mary's School for the Deaf

**New Mexico School for the Deaf:** As to my experience as Student Life Educator for HS Boys in the past..(this applies to last 2 -3 years). The rule for iPhone. The HS students can have their iPhone/Smartphone in their rooms as they go to their rooms @ 10pm... lights off @ 10:30pm the iPhone must be visible seen on a desk  bit distance from bed.  If the iPhone/Smartphone was in progress use after 10:30pm... giving a warning (excuse) then if again (1st) 24 hrs no iPhone/Smartphone... if again (2nd) a week no iPhone/Smartphone... if again (3rd) a month no iPhone/Smartphone      HS students are aware about that on the first day...   By the way, as for Seniors (Independent Living Skills Program) they go to their rooms @ 10:30pm/11pm... lights off @ 11pm/11:30pm. As for this school year, I work with MS Boys, the rules does apply for them as they go to their rooms @ 9pm... lights off @ 9:30pm

-Jeff Bailey, *Student Life Educator*, Aspen Cottage MS Boys, New Mexico School for the Deaf

**Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind**: At the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind we allow the students to go to bed with their phone.  Some parents have requested we lock them up from bedtime until they wake up – we do follow the parents’ requests.  If we find that having the phone interferes with their ability to go to bed on time they are warned that this could lead to loss of privilege.  Students who abuse this must turn in their phones before they go to bed and then they get them before they go to school.

-Jim Kelly II, *Director of Student Life*, Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind

**Wisconsin School for the Deaf:**  Students are allowed to have cell phones after school hours.  However, students are not allowed to use them in the restroom, dining room (supper), or after bedtimes.  (Elementary and Middle School Students should give them to their CCC before bedtime to be held and/or charged in the office until the next afternoon.)

No live video chats or videophones are allowed in the bedrooms or bathroom areas. Students who do not comply with these rules will be given an appropriate consequence. If staff have concerns that a student is using their phone, tablet, or other electronic device inappropriately, staff have the right to confiscate the item.  Parents will be contacted immediately to inform them of the concern.

Selfies and the use of video communication (videophone/FaceTime/etc.) must not include other students in the background without their consent or knowledge. When taking a selfie, the student must be considerate of the property of Wisconsin School for the Deaf. Neutral backgrounds are strongly encouraged in order to avoid potential ramifications/consequences of using school/dorm property or student/staff without their consent.

-Jeffrey Rawlings, Wisconsin School for the Deaf

**California School for the Deaf-Fremont:** The policy according to the student handbook is below:Each cottage department may have in-house expectation regarding communication devices usage. Basically, in elementary and middle school cottages, residential students are required to turn in their phones to cottage counselors at bed time. Their phones are stored in pockets of a hanging shoe organizer, each being recharged by their own chargers. Students may pick theirs up after school. On Fridays, due to their homegoing, they pick up theirs in the morning.

For high school, freshmen and sophomores follow the similar expectations as above except that they may pick up their phones in the morning before school. Juniors may keep their phones with them overnight provided that they do not use phones during bedtime or they would lose this privilege. Seniors in the ILS (Independent Living Skills) apartments have full control of their phones including using their phones overnight. We call it a natural consequence if they became very tired in the following morning. It is part of their transition plan as we prepare them to survive after graduation.

Communication Devices

In accordance with EC 48901.5, the governing board of each school district may regulate the possession or use of any electronic signaling device that operates through the transmission or receipt of radio waves, including, but not limited to texting and signaling equipment, by pupils of the school district while the pupils are on campus, while attending school –sponsored activities, or while under the supervision of school district employees. Use of cellular telephones & electronic devices are prohibited during school hours with the following exception. Students will be allowed to use personal electronic devices in the cafeteria during lunch. In addition, cell phones & electronic devices may be used on school property before and after school hours. If a student is using an electronic device outside of the time mentioned in above paragraph\*, the device will be confiscated and given to the adjustment teacher to be held until the end of the school day or if at cottage, it will be held for 24 hours. Subsequent offenses will be considered defiance of school authority and students will be disciplined as follows:

Second Offense - the device will remain with the adjustment teacher until the end of the school day. One hour of Conference Time will be issued, and parent contact will be established and if at cottage it will be kept for one week. Third Offense - the device will remain with the adjustment teacher and will be returned during parent conference. Each subsequent offense will result in a one day suspension and if at cottage, it will be kept for two weeks. \*Personal electronic devices may be used in the classroom at teacher discretion. Appropriate use of these devices in the classroom include looking up facts, determining mathematical calculations, entering due dates in a calendar, photographing relevant notes/homework assignments and other educational purposes in the classroom deemed by the teacher as appropriate. If a student in a classroom is found/determined by the teacher to be using his/her electronic device outside of the aforementioned purposes, the teacher may confiscate the device and submit it to the adjustment teacher or principal. Only the classroom teacher can determine when it is appropriate for a student to utilize an electronic device. Devices may not be plugged into classroom outlets.

Students who bring cell phones or electronic devices to school are responsible for them. They should be secured at all times. CSD is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Communication devices with camera or video if used inappropriately is taken away, and families will be asked to keep it at home for the rest of the year.

-Ethan Bernstein, CSD-Fremont

**Oregon School for the Deaf:** Middle school residential students are required to turn in their cell phones nightly before they go to bed. The phones are locked up in a room, charging overnight, then the graveyard residential staff assists with returning the phones back to their owners in the morning before going to school.

High school students are allowed to take their phones with them to their rooms. We have a three-bust system: first bust is a warning and we record it in the communication log book, second bust is taking the phone for the night (asking nicely for the phone, but if they resist then they receive a more severe punishment), third bust equates to a week of no phone in the bedroom. The phone is taken away and charged in the staff office. Ongoing busts then equates to one additional week, so 4th bust will be two weeks of no phone in bedroom, 5th bust is three weeks, and so on. We have not gotten past the 4th bust as our students typically learn their lesson by then.

Other than that, they are free to use their personal devices during the residential hours. We do have an hour reserved every day for "zero technology hour", which means that there are no cell phone, laptop, ipad, and such usage during this hour. After initial push-back, the students have bought in and we have seen improvements in socializing.

-Boaz Edmunson, Dean of Student Life