



School District 69 Qualicum
Collaborative Education Alternative Program

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Hello CEAPers!!!

I want to let you know about an important change in school policy which took effect on the first day of classes of this school year (September 2019). All CEAP Secondary areas, including classrooms, hallways, and common meeting spaces are now designated CELL-PHONE FREE ZONES during instructional time. As a result, when classes are in session, cell-phones should remain in lockers, or in back-packs / purses, off or in silent mode. Phones should NOT remain in pockets or on students and smart watches should NOT be connected to the cell-phone. This is a change from previous years, when teachers set individual policies for their classrooms, and as noted extends to common areas such as hallways. All classes now have commonly worded cell-phone policies posted, supported by a progressive administrative policy to reinforce it. In addition, these policies are posted to our school website.

Please note that this policy does not restrict the use of cell-phones, before or after school, on lunch break, or time between classes. The phrase “during instructional time” is a key aspect of this policy. In addition, this does not preclude the use of cell-phones under teacher supervision due to “special circumstance” such as for the production of project/inquiry work when no other suitable technology is available. Teacher permission will always be required in such circumstances.

As a technology forward school, CEAP wants to help teach and promote appropriate digital citizenship. Our school staff has overwhelmingly agreed that a consistent school-wide policy restricting cell-phone use during instructional time will help students stay more present and engaged in their learning. The intent is to support them in their academic success, removing a major temptation and distraction, while promoting greater focus, face to face social interaction and connection. Teachers have repeatedly observed that a cell-phone on a desk, or in a pocket, even when being used as a research tool, still provides too tempting a distraction. When it dings, vibrates, or buzzes, the minds of even the best of students wander away. Studies tell us that it can take the brain up to ten minutes to reengage after responding to a cell-phone distraction. Cell-phones are not merely distractions for their owners in the classroom, but can also be a source of distraction for teachers and classmates alike, undermining our learning environments.

For students coming from the elementary level, it is likely that this is not a change from their previous school. For parents, please help to promote this policy by restricting phone contact with your young person to before and after school, at lunch, or at class changes, when cell-phone use is allowed. This means that when you message or text your young person, it may be as much as 80 minutes before you get a response. For situations that require faster responses, such as emergencies, parents are to call the office and we will deliver a message to the classroom. It should be noted that during our early warning processes of this policy this past June, we received overwhelming support from our parent community regarding this decision. Your support is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Don Bold, CEAP Principal

