



Meeting Norms

Stay focused and student centered | Listen actively, respectfully, and without judgment | Communicate with integrity
Honor board time with starting on-time and not being redundant | Limit sidebar conversations
Independent thought and one voice for decisions | Maintain confidentiality

AGENDA - SPECIAL MEETING - CELL PHONE POLICY REVIEW

Mancos School District Board of Education: The Mancos Public Schools Board of Education provides highly effective governance for our school's strategic student achievement efforts.

July 27, 2026

5:00 PM

West Wing Boardroom

1. Establish Quorum
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Review Norms
4. Policy Review
JICJ Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices
Cell Phone policy review process to date:
 1. First Reading - June 15, 2026 Work Session
 2. Second Reading, First Vote - June 15, 2026 Business Meeting
 3. Third Reading - June 27, 2026 - Special Meeting
5. Adjournment

	Team Driven Shared Leadership
	Data Based Problem Solving and Decision Making
	Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System
	Layered Continuum of Supports (LCS)- Evidence Based Practices, Instruction, and Interventions
	Family, School, and Community Partnerships

Mancos School District

Cell phone, smart watches and other personal technology devices guidelines (Policy JICJ) - **DRAFT 2, July 17, 2026**

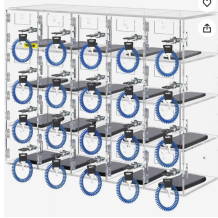
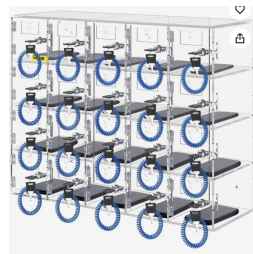
Guiding Principles: In alignment with our mission to provide safe, challenging, and positive learning experiences, the Mancos School District cell phone and personal technology device guidelines are designed to support the growth, achievement, engagement and the social-emotional development of every student all day long.

Rationale: Our cell phone guidelines protect student well-being, optimize learning, and support our staff. School must be a focused space for growth, and managing the pervasive pull of technology is a responsibility we share as a community. We protect this space by focusing on three key priorities:

- **Building Healthy Habits:** Smart phones are engineered to capture and hold attention and can become addictive for some youth. By creating a phone-free environment during the school day, we help students break the cycle of notification compulsion and build intentional, healthy relationships with technology. The risks of social media and toxic social comparisons are highest during adolescence. We provide firm boundaries and education for all students, and gradually increase autonomy as they mature and build digital literacy.
- **Restoring Engagement, Focus and Connection:** Eliminating phone distractions safeguards a student's access to learning and encourages real, face-to-face social connection.
- **Supporting Our Staff:** Clear boundaries keep our teachers focused on what they do best—teaching—instead of spending their valuable time monitoring student cell phones all day long.

CELL PHONE AND SMART WATCH GUIDELINES

Text Key: Black - new Blue - last year	Elementary	Middle School	High School
What devices are restricted?	Restricted: Cell phones, smart watches and personal technology devices (PTDs) <i>Personal technology devices (PTDs) include “any privately owned portable technology devices included but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, [personal] tablets, laptops, cameras, audio and/or video recorders and players and all other hand-held electronic communication and data storage devices.”</i> 2025-26 Guidelines: Same as proposed above.		
When are cell phones and smart watches restricted?	ALL DAY 2025-26 Guidelines: Same as proposed above.		During Academic Hours: AM: 7:50 - 12:15 pm PM: 1:00 - 4:10 pm <i>Devices are allowed during the lunch break for all high school students who stay on campus or choose to go off campus.</i> 2025-26 Guidelines: Not allowed during academics (class time). Allowed during passing periods, lunch and breaks.

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Where are cell phones and smart watches restricted?	Cell phones and smart watches are restricted across the entire Mancos School District campus. This includes classrooms, small group rooms, bathrooms, locker rooms, hallways, gyms, outdoor spaces, athletics buildings, and in the parking lots. 2025-26 Guidelines: Devices were not allowed in the spaces above from bell to bell. <i>(Note: Consistency and enforcement has been challenging due to lack of clarity, high number of devices, students, and infractions.)</i>		Cell phones and smart watches are restricted across the entire Mancos School District campus. This includes classrooms, small group rooms, bathrooms, locker rooms, hallways, gyms, outdoor spaces, athletics buildings, and in the parking lots. Lunch - During lunch, high school students who choose to stay on campus may use their devices in the cafe' and at approved outside gathering spots such as the PC steps, front lawn, and picnic tables. 2025-26 Guidelines: Devices were not allowed in the spaces above during class time. Devices were allowed during lunch break. <i>(Note: Consistency and enforcement has been challenging due to lack of clarity, high number of devices, students, and infractions.)</i>
How will cell phones and smart watches be managed?	Before school starts, if they have a cell phone and/or smart watch, elementary students will place their devices in a locking cabinet managed by classroom teachers. <i>(K-3 devices are discouraged and must be kept in a backpack.)</i>  2025-26 Guidelines: Devices stored backpacks. <i>(Note: Consistency and enforcement has been challenging due to lack of clarity, high number of devices, students, and infractions.)</i>	Before school starts, MS students will place their cell phone and/or smart watch in an individual device locker located near the main office within view of administration. Each student will have their own key to open and close their box at the beginning and end of the day. Administration will also have a key.  2025-26 Guidelines: Devices stored in secure pouch backpacks or lockers. <i>(Note: Consistency and enforcement has been challenging due to lack of clarity, high number of devices, students, and infractions.)</i>	Before school starts, HS students will place their cell phone and/or smart watch in an individual device locker located near the main office or at the entrance of the Historical High School. Students will be able to choose which building they desire their device to be located based upon their class schedule and preferences. Each student will have their own key to open and close their box in the morning, lunch (if desired) and at the end of the day. Administration will also have a key.  2025-26 Guidelines: Devices stored in secure pouch backpacks or lockers. <i>(Note: Consistency and enforcement has been challenging due to lack of clarity, high number of devices, students, and infractions.)</i>

CELL PHONE AND SMARTWATCH GUIDELINES: SUPPORTS

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
What if a student needs their device at school?	If a student requires a cell phone, smart watch, or personal device for medical, academic, or communication needs, parents or guardians can request this accommodation by reaching out to their child's teacher, counselor, Dean of Students and/or Principal. 2025-26 Guidelines: Same as proposed above.		
What are the consequences of having a device during restricted times?	Using or having a cell phone or PTD during restricted times will be handled as a Major/Level 3 offense. The device will be confiscated and returned only after a parent conference. Restorative and disciplinary consequences may include: research assignment and report, loss of off-campus lunch privileges, detention, bag checks, in or out of school suspension depending on frequency and severity. 2025-26 Guidelines: Handled as a Minor/Level 2 offense		
How can students and parents and/or guardians communicate during the school day?  	For parents and guardians contacting their child: Urgent: Call the main office and leave a message with office staff. Office staff will notify your child's teacher within the hour. Important: Contact your child's teacher through a phone message or email. For students who want to contact their parent or guardian: Urgent: Students may ask the teacher for help contacting the parent. With supervision, a student may call a parent. 2025-26 Practices: Same as proposed above.	For parents and guardians contacting their child: Urgent: Call the main office and leave a message with office staff. Office staff will notify your child's teacher within the hour. Important: • *NEW* Email your child. • Contact your child's Crew Advisor through a phone message or email. For students who want to contact their parent or guardian: Urgent: Students may ask office staff or a teacher permission to use their office or classroom phone. 2025-26 Practices: Parents left messages with the office, teachers, and often texted messages to students.	For parents and guardians contacting their child: Urgent: Call the main office and leave a message with office staff. Office staff will notify your child's teacher within the hour. Important: • *NEW* Email your child • Contact your child during the lunch hour. • Contact your child's Crew Advisor through a phone message or email. For students who want to contact their parent or guardian: Urgent: 1. Students may ask office staff or a teacher permission to use the office or classroom phone. 2. HS students may use their personal phone during lunch. 2025-26 Practices: Parents left messages with the office, teachers, and often texted messages to students.

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
How can students and parents and/or guardians communicate during an emergency?	During emergencies, communication to guardians will come from the school's emergency communication system. Note: If possible, school officials will transport student phones outside during evacuations. Once critical operations have ceased and parents and guardians have been notified, phone access may be granted to students as appropriate and determined by school district and emergency officials. From the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO): "Access to phones during the school day reduces student safety in normal and especially emergency situations. During normal days, phone access promotes social media drama and cyberbullying and makes it easier for students to plan physical altercations, all of which hinder student safety." During school emergencies, parents understandably want to contact their children and be reassured that the children are safe. However, the risks posed by phone access during school emergencies are even greater than during a normal school day. 2025-26 Practices: During school situations in the 25-26 school year, some students contacted their parents and guardians. This contributed to inconsistent messaging, confusion, and jammed phone lines during the emergency incident.		
What about other PTDs such as laptops, tablets and cameras?	Board Policy states that "The Board of Education believes the use of cell phones and other personal technology devices (PTDs) must be regulated to assure that the use of such devices will not disrupt or interfere with the educational process or school operations." Currently, Mancos School District does not allow PTDs at school without the permission of school administration. Mancos School District is reviewing our practices and will release clear guidelines on these devices within the first month of school.		

School Policy: Current Policy and Recommended Revisions	
CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
JICJ - Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices (Link to Policy) The Board of Education believes the use of cell phones and other personal technology devices (PTDs) must be regulated to assure that the use of such devices will not disrupt or interfere with the educational process or school operations. Therefore, students may only use PTDs on district property, on a district vehicle or at a district or school-sponsored activity or event in accordance with this policy. Cell phones will not be permitted to be used during class time. Whether class is in the classroom, in the gym, or outside, from bell to bell, cell phones are not to be used or seen. At the elementary and middle school level, cell phones will not be permitted to be seen or used anytime throughout the entire school day.	JICJ - Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices The Board of Education believes the use of cell phones and other personal technology devices (PTDs) must be regulated to assure that the use of such devices will not disrupt or interfere with the educational process or school operations. Therefore, students may only use PTDs on district property, on a district vehicle or at a district or school-sponsored activity or event in accordance with this policy. For purposes of this policy, "personal technology device" (PTD) includes any privately- owned portable technology device, including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, tablets, laptops, cameras, audio and/or video recorders and players, and all other hand-held electronic communication and data storage devices.

For purposes of this policy, "personal technology device" (PTD) includes any privately- owned portable technology device, including but not limited to cell phones, smart watches, tablets, laptops, cameras, audio and/or video recorders and players, and all other hand-held electronic communication and data storage devices.

Student use of PTDs with cameras and/or video recording capabilities is prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms or any other location where such use could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy.

Students shall not use PTDs to engage in, promote or facilitate any other conduct that violates the student code of conduct, other Board policies or regulations, or state or federal law.

Violation of this policy or any other district, school or classroom rule or regulation on student use of PTDs may result in disciplinary measures and/or temporary confiscation of the PTD.

Confiscated devices shall be returned to the student only after a conference with the parent/guardian, student and school personnel. If the building principal or designee believes a student's possession or use of a PTD may involve a violation of the law, the building principal or designee may also refer the matter to law enforcement.

The district shall not be responsible for loss, theft or destruction of PTDs brought onto school or district property or while the student is attending district or school-sponsored activities or events.

Adopted: April 18, 2022 (CASB Core Policy Adoption)
Reviewed: August 19, 2024
September 9, 2024

Revised: September 16, 2024 (Board of Education)

Cell Phones and Smart Watches

At the elementary and middle school level, Cell phones and smart watches will not be permitted to be used **or seen** during ~~class time~~ **the entire school day from morning bell to the dismissal bell in all campus spaces, inside and outside.** ~~Whether class is in the classroom, in the gym, or outside, from bell to bell, cell phones are not to be used or seen. At the elementary and middle school level, cell phones will not be permitted to be seen or used anytime throughout the entire school day.~~ **At the high school level, cell phones and smart watches will not be permitted to be used or seen during instructional hours from the morning bell to lunch and the after lunch bell to the dismissal bell in all campus spaces, inside and outside. This includes passing periods and independent study blocks.**

Other Personal Technology Devices (PTD)

Student use of PTDs with cameras and/or video recording capabilities **including laptops, tablets, and cameras of all kinds** are prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms or any other location where such use could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy.

Students shall not use PTDs to engage in, promote or facilitate any other conduct that violates the student code of conduct, other Board policies or regulations, or state or federal law.

Violation of this policy or any other district, school or classroom rule or regulation on student use of PTDs may result in disciplinary measures and/or temporary confiscation of the PTD. Confiscated devices shall be returned to the student only after a conference with the parent/guardian, student and school personnel. If the building principal or designee believes a student's possession or use of a PTD may involve a violation of the law, the building principal or designee may also refer the matter to law enforcement.

LEGAL REF.: C.R.S. 18-7-109 (posting, possession or exchange of a private image by a juvenile)

CROSS REFS.: JIC and subcodes, Student Conduct

JIH, Student Interviews, Interrogations, Searches and Arrests

JK and subcodes, Student Discipline

JS*, Student Use of the Internet and Electronic Communication

The district shall not be responsible for loss, theft or destruction of PTDs brought onto school or district property or while the student is attending district or school-sponsored activities or events.

References:

[American Association of Pediatrics](#)

[American Psychological Association](#)

[The Colorado Sun](#)

[Common Sense Media](#)

[Paragon Institute](#)

[The Jed Foundation](#)



July 17, 2026

Dear Mancos Community,

Mancos School District is not alone in our efforts to ensure a safe and engaging learning environment for our students. Across our region, country and the world, communities are reflecting deeply on the impact cell phone and personal device use has on student learning and social development. Ongoing research shows that cell phones in schools increase distraction and anxiety, impacting teaching, learning, and social development. Here in Mancos Schools, we see these impacts everyday and have taken a step forward to address these concerns.

Last April, after a series of events, year-end reflections, and review of our school-climate data, we determined a review of our Cell Phone and Personal Technology Device and Guidelines was necessary. It is clear that our community, students, staff, and parents, desire a safe, supportive and distraction free learning environment for our students everyday **and** that our current guidelines and policy is not supporting this goal. We have begun a path that will soon result in shifts to our guidelines that bring consistency and clarity, ensuring our learning environment prioritizes face-to-face interactions and focused learning experiences for students.

We understand that cell phones are integrated into our daily lives and the lives of our students and families in many different ways. We know that reductions to cell phone availability during the school day will cause difficulty for some students and families initially. However, our commitment to creating the best possible conditions supersedes the challenges we all will face in our transition to new practices. As you'll see in the attached draft, we are working to support students and families through the transition with our focus on a successful implementation and the positive outcomes we expect to see because of our efforts. Research shows that schools that have clear, restrictive policies see a boost in engagement and teacher satisfaction.

We know that a revision of our policies and practices is not a quick fix and we must support our students and families holistically as they navigate a new world of personal technology devices, AI and more. In the coming weeks, you'll hear more about how we're intentionally building community for all students through our Crew model, curriculum, and digital literacy instruction. Stay tuned.

OUR PROCESS

Since we began in April, we have conducted district wide-surveys, hosted focus groups, and created initial drafts of new guidelines and policy. On June 6, 2026, a first draft was released to the community with an opportunity for feedback and discussion. Additionally, on June 9 and 15, the District Accountability Committee (DAC) and Board of Education respectively had robust discussions about the draft and topic. Each group provided a diverse set of perspectives and questions for our team to consider. Today, with your input, school data, and research in mind, we're sharing a revised draft and additional details for your review and input.

The [new draft](#) and details include:

- Increased clarity with descriptions of current and proposed changes

- A revised proposal for how we manage cell phone storage in middle and high school. Based on your feedback, we've added measures to access phones more easily in an emergency, increase security and support student autonomy.
- Additional information and resources
- Student, parent, and staff survey results

We hope that you take the time to review the new draft and provide feedback using one of the methods listed below. We'd like to hear what you think before we finalize our recommendations. Our timeline is as follows:

Community Input Window: July 20 - July 27

- Complete this [feedback form](#) *and/or*
- Join our Listening Session on Thursday, July 23 at 3:00 pm *and/or*
- Email us individually or our team! (see emails below)

Final Draft and Recommendations: July 27 - 31, 2026

- District leadership team will review feedback together on July 27
- The Board of Education will hold a Special Meeting on July 27 at 5:00 pm.

New Guidelines and Policy Revisions Released: Friday, July 31, 2026

Thank you for your engagement and support as we work to provide a safe, supportive and engaging school environment for every child!

In partnership,

Audrey Hazleton
Superintendent
ahazleton@mancosre6.edu

Julie Porter
Secondary Principal
jporter@mancosre6.edu

Josh Gardner
Secondary Dean of Students
jgardner@mancosre6.edu

Molly Ender
District Social Worker
mender@mancosre6.edu

Dr. Mary Marable
Elementary Principal
mmarable@mancosre6.edu

Laura McNeil
Elementary Dean of Students
lmcneil@mancosre6.edu

Attachments:

[Cell Phone Guidelines: Draft 2](#)

[Community Surveys - Results and Synthesis](#)

JICJ - Student Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Technology Devices

REDLINE Draft July 27, 2026

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Cell Phones and Smart Watches

At the elementary and middle school level, Cell phones and smart watches will not be permitted to be used or seen during class time the entire school day from morning bell to the dismissal bell in all campus spaces, inside and outside. ~~Whether class is in the classroom, in the gym, or outside, from bell to bell, cell phones are not to be used or seen. At the elementary and middle school level, cell phones will not be permitted to be seen or used anytime throughout the entire school day.~~ **At the high school level, cell phones and smart watches will not be permitted to be used or seen during instructional hours from the morning bell to lunch and the after lunch bell to the dismissal bell in all campus spaces, inside and outside. This includes passing periods and independent study blocks.**

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Students shall not use PTDs to engage in, promote or facilitate any other conduct that violates the student code of conduct, other Board policies or regulations, or state or federal law.

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Revised: September 16, 2024 (Board of Education)

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Mancos School District RE6 Page **1** of **1**

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May - Students

Student Survey Cell Phone Survey

May 2026

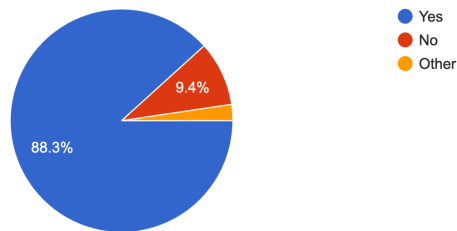
Grades: 6-12

Responses: 171

Note: Students in grades 4, 5 were unable to complete the survey due to scheduling conflicts

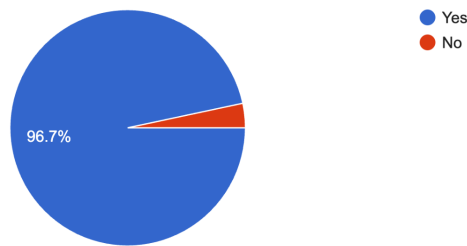
Do you have a cell phone?

171 responses



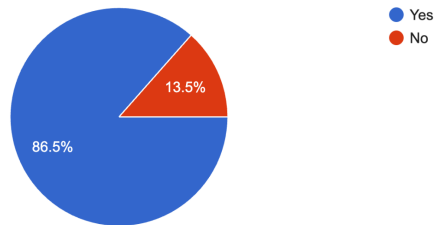
If yes, is it a smartphone with apps and access to the internet?

150 responses



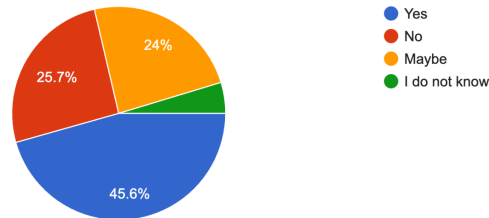
Do you bring a phone to school?

171 responses



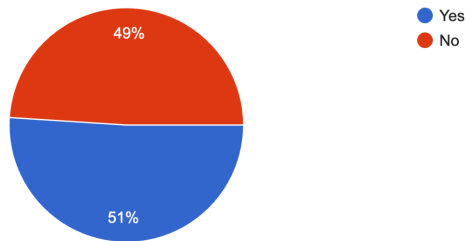
Do you feel you can contact your parent(s) in a timely manner when you need to during the school day?

171 responses



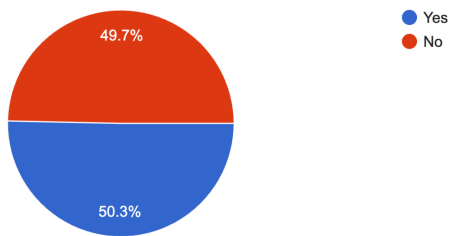
If you bring a phone to school, do you use it for school purposes, like classwork?

147 responses



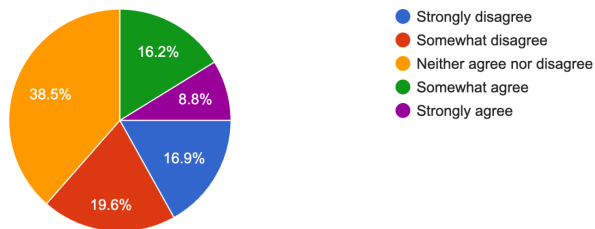
If you bring a phone to school, do you use it for personal reasons, like social media or talking to friends?

147 responses



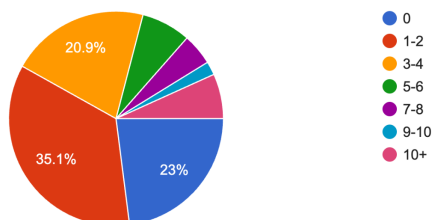
Please rate your agreement with this statement: "I feel worried about missing out on things when I don't have access to my phone."

148 responses



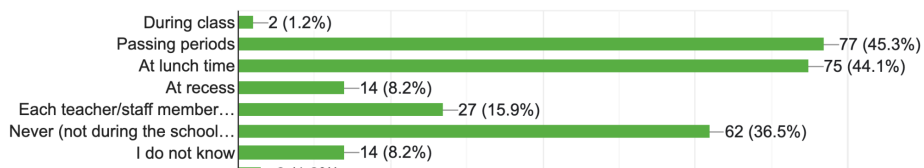
During a single school day, around how many times do your parents contact you through your mobile phone? Number of times per day:

148 responses



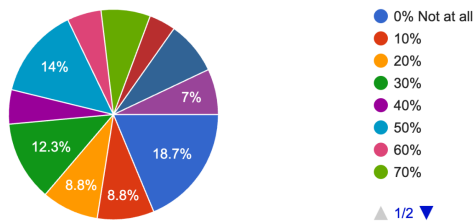
Under your school's phone policy, when are students allowed to use their phones at school? Select all that apply.

170 responses



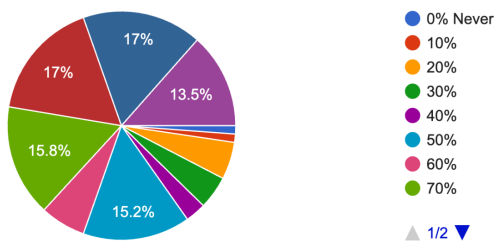
How satisfied are you with your school's phone policy?

171 responses



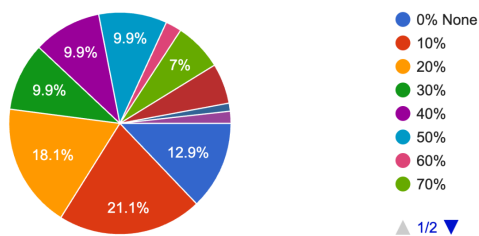
How consistently do teachers and staff enforce your school's phone policy? Give your best guess.

171 responses



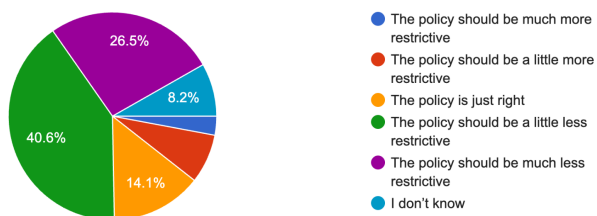
What percentage of your classmates are using their phone when they shouldn't be? Give your best guess.

171 responses



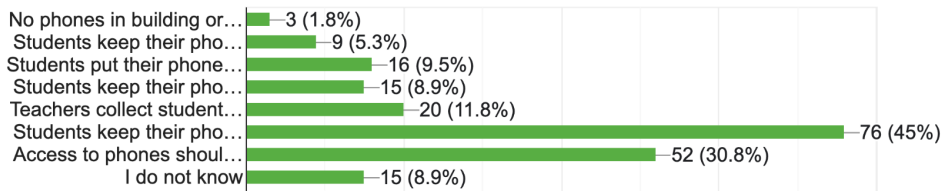
In your opinion, should your school's phone policy be more or less restrictive than it is now?

170 responses



How should your school restrict access to phones during the school day? Select all that apply.

169 responses



- No phones in building or on campus
- Students keep their phones in their lockers (lockers only)
- Students put their phones in a bag/container at the beginning of the school day
- Students keep their phones on their person in a locked pouch (such as a Yondr)
- Teachers collect students' phones at the beginning of each class, they are stored in a charging cubby, and returned at the end of class
- Students keep their phones, but phones must be out of sight ('no-show')
- Access to phones should not be restricted

Open Responses (Synthesized by Gemini AI)

Please share any other thoughts you have about your school's cell phone policy:

"Based on the feedback provided, student opinions on the school's cell phone policy are diverse, but several major themes emerge. While a few students support the current rules or even advocate for stricter enforcement, the vast majority express a desire for more leniency, citing safety, personal responsibility, and practical utility.

Here is a synthesis of the key viewpoints and themes from the student responses:

1. Safety and Quick Parent Communication

The most common argument against strict cell phone restrictions is safety. Students feel strongly that having immediate access to their parents is essential.

- **Emergency Contact:** Students worry about school or family emergencies and argue that routing calls through the front office is too slow and inefficient.
- **Peace of Mind:** Simply having the phone on their person makes students (and their parents) feel significantly safer and less anxious throughout the day.

2. The "Rebellion" Effect and Sneakiness

A recurring psychological argument from students is that overly restrictive policies are counterproductive.

- **Creativity in Sneaking:** Students note that tight restrictions do not stop phone use; they just force students to become sneakier, more dishonest, and more distracted by trying to hide their devices.
- **The "Forbidden Fruit" Concept:** Several students pointed out that banning phones altogether removes the opportunity to teach responsible use and instead makes using the phone feel like an act of rebellion

3. "Work-First" and Incentive-Based Policies

A highly popular middle-ground suggestion is to tie phone privileges to academic performance and task completion.

- **Reward for Finishing Work:** Many students proposed a system where phones are kept away during instruction but can be accessed freely once all classwork, assignments, or tests are completed.

- **Academic Autonomy:** Some argue that high school should prepare them for college, meaning students should be responsible for their own choices. If they choose to be on their phone instead of learning, they should face the natural consequence of failing grades.

4. Use During Non-Instructional Time

Many students feel that classroom learning time should be treated differently than social or transition times.

- **Passing Periods and Lunch:** There is a strong consensus that students should be allowed to use their phones during passing periods, lunch, and recess to send quick messages, check schedules, or take a mental break.
- **Focus and Music:** Multiple students noted that they use their phones strictly to listen to music while doing independent work, claiming it helps them focus. They expressed frustration that headphone/earbud policies are often policed more strictly than the phones themselves.

5. Consistency and Enforcement Issues

Several students highlighted flaws in how the current policy is being managed by staff.

- **The "Weird Middle Ground":** Some feel the current policy fails because it is neither strict enough to completely stop phone use nor lenient enough to allow phones to be used as educational tools.
- **Inconsistent Enforcement:** Students noted that some teachers enforce the rules strictly while others ignore infractions, creating an environment that feels unfair or "bipolar."

Summary of Student Recommendations

To address these concerns, students suggested several compromise-based solutions:

- **"In Pocket/Backpack" Rule:** Allow students to keep phones on their person (e.g., in their pockets) so they are accessible for emergencies, but require them to be out of sight during class.
- **The "Bathroom Desk" Compromise:** One student suggested a physical trade-off, such as placing your phone on the teacher's desk specifically when leaving for the restroom.
- **Clear Consequences:** Instead of immediate confiscation by administrators, give one warning first, or focus consequences on grading and late-work penalties rather than taking physical property.

Here is a synthesis of the key themes from this final set of student responses:

1. Reiteration of Safety & Parent Connection

The most prominent theme remained the safety and security aspect of having a personal device.

- **Emergency Coordination:** Students emphasized that during a worst-case scenario, like a school lockdown, having immediate access to their parents is a safety necessity.
- **Direct Communication:** They reiterated that parents will text their child directly in a "time of dire need" rather than calling the school office.

2. Psychological Backlash & Property Rights

Several students warned about the psychological effects of a zero-tolerance policy.

- **The Temptation to Sneak:** Students repeated the sentiment that banning phones entirely only increases the urge to break the rules. They argued that a relaxed policy actually decreases the temptation to hide devices during classwork.
- **Ownership and Authority:** One student raised a sharp objection regarding property rights, stating: *"You don't pay my phone bill, you can't take my phone, period."*

3. Specific Requests for Leniency

Rather than asking for a free-for-all, students identified specific compromise times where they feel phones should be permitted:

- **Passing Periods, Recess, and Lunch:** Students feel these non-instructional times are appropriate windows to check their screens.
- **Post-Work Reward:** A few reiterated that phones should only be restricted during active instruction or until their classwork is completed.

4. Appreciation for the Current Policy (And What's Missing)

Some students expressed gratitude for the school's current approach, specifically noting what the school *didn't* do.

- **No Yondr Pouches:** One student specifically thanked the school for *"not investing in useless, overpriced Yondr pouches,"* indicating that physical locking pouches would be highly unpopular.
- **Appreciation for Input:** Another student shared, *"Thank you so much for wanting student input!"*

5. Unrelated School Concerns

A few students used this final "any other thoughts" space to bring up entirely different school climate issues:

- **Vaping in the Bathrooms:** One student flagged a safety/health concern, noting: *"I've noticed some kids are vaping in the bathroom."*
- **A Desire to Connect:** One student offered to meet directly with administration to help talk through the decision: *"If you are split between a decision I would like to set up a meeting and talk to you guys..."*

May - Families

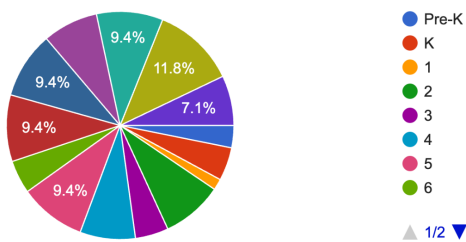
Parent Survey Cell Phone Survey

May 2026

127 responses

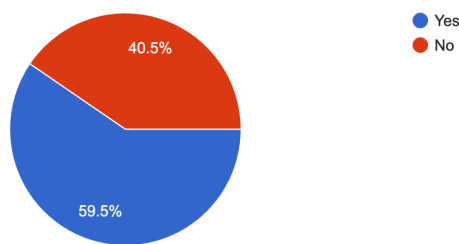
What grade is your child in?

127 responses



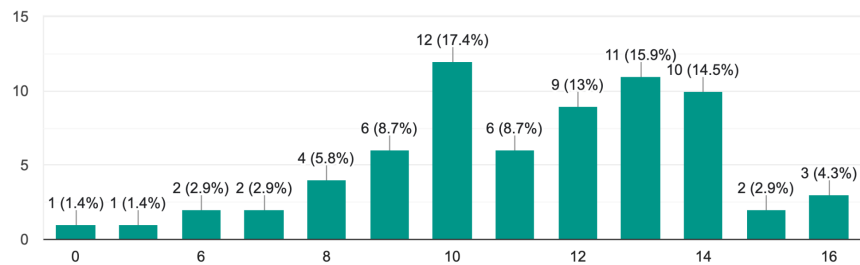
Does your child have a cell phone?

126 responses



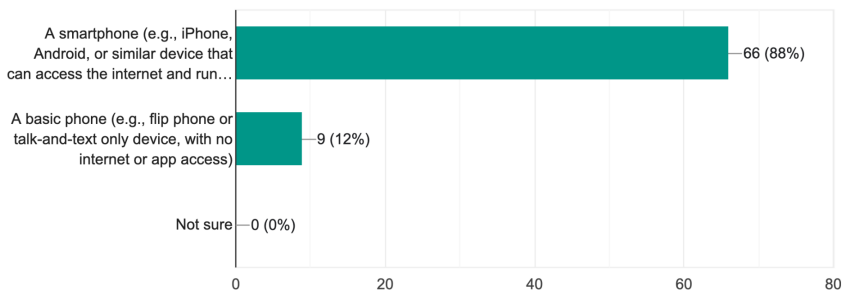
At what age did your child get their first smartphone (with apps and can access the internet)?

69 responses



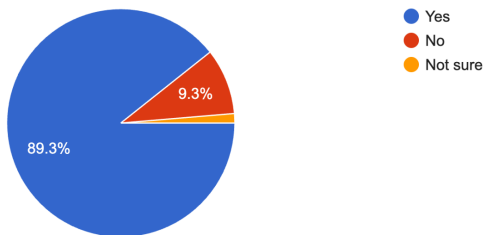
What type of phone does your child use?

75 responses



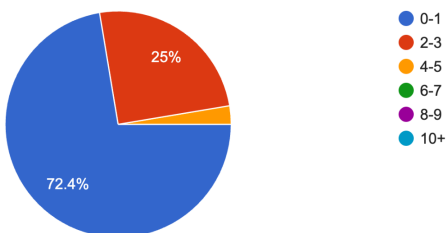
Do they bring their phone to school?

75 responses



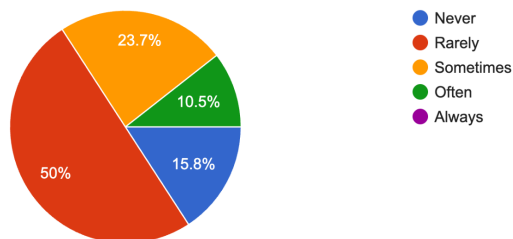
During a typical school day, how many times a day do you contact your child by phone (e.g., text messages, phone calls)? Number of times per day:

76 responses



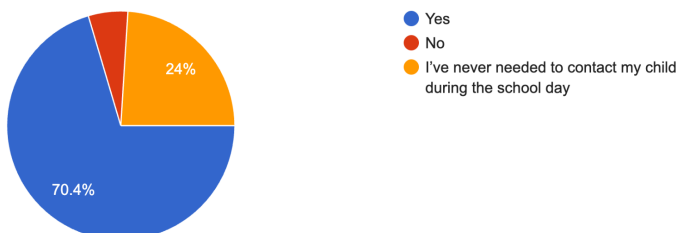
When you have conflicts with your child, how often are they related to their cell phone use? (e.g., screen time, boundaries, or access)

76 responses



Do you feel you can reach your child in a timely manner during the school day when needed?

125 responses



Synthesis of responses to the question: Please share any other thoughts you have about the phone policy at your child's school. (Synthesized by Gemini AI)

The feedback from Mancos school parents reveals a deep, deeply felt tension. While there is a strong collective desire to protect children from the distractions and mental health tolls of screen addiction, it is heavily

countered by a practical, modern reality: parents feel they *must* have a direct line to their children for logistics and safety.

Here is a synthesis of the key themes, concerns, and compromises raised by parents:

1. The Case for a "Phone-Free" Campus

A significant portion of parents strongly advocates for highly restrictive, "bell-to-bell" phone bans across all grade levels (K-12).

- **Prioritizing Academics and Social Development:** Parents point out that a phone's primary function in school is distraction—playing games, watching videos, or browsing social media. They believe removing screens directly correlates with improved focus, social interaction, and mental health.
- **Reducing Bullying and Peer Pressure:** Multiple parents noted that phone access facilitates cyberbullying and social exclusion. One parent shared that her phone-free sixth-grader was actively teased and called an "iPad kid," highlighting the intense social pressure surrounding device ownership.
- **The "Forbidden Fruit" and Policy Loopholes:** Several parents suggested that partial bans (e.g., allowing phones only at lunch or recess) don't work, as kids just spend those free times staring at screens or sneaking them into bathrooms.

2. The Safety and "Office Communication" Bottleneck

The most passionate arguments against a total ban come from parents concerned about emergency communication and daily logistics.

- **Unreliable School Channels:** A major pain point is the school's front office. Multiple parents shared frustrating experiences where secondary secretaries did not answer the phone, voice messages went unchecked, and students missed appointments as a result. For these parents, direct texting is a logistical necessity.
- **Emergency Peace of Mind:** First responders and parents alike expressed high anxiety over crisis situations (like lockdowns or evacuations). One parent noted a recent incident where an uncertain smell in the cafeteria led to an evacuation; because students left their backpacks (and phones) inside, they could not coordinate with siblings or reassure anxious parents.
- **The Single-Parent Reality:** Single and working parents emphasized that they rely on direct lines of communication to manage changing after-school schedules and pickup routines.

3. Demands for Policy Consistency

Several parents—including those who work as teachers or substitutes—pointed out that the current rules are failing because of how they are enforced.

- **The Substitute Dilemma:** Substitutes noted that cell phone expectations vary wildly from classroom to classroom, and the distinction between middle school and high school policies is incredibly muddied.
- **"All-or-Nothing" Staff Alignment:** Parents agree that if a policy exists, *all* teachers must enforce it equally. When enforcement is lax or left to individual discretion, it creates confusion and breeds resentment among students.

4. Proposed Middle Grounds & Solutions

Rather than a flat-out ban, many parents suggested structured compromises:

- **The "Out-of-Sight" Rule:** Keep phones silenced and stored in backpacks or homeroom lockers. They are accessible for after-school logistics or emergencies, but entirely absent during instructional time.
- **Smartwatches as an Alternative:** Several parents highlighted "Gizmo" or smartwatches as a perfect compromise. These devices allow GPS tracking and direct parent communication but can be locked into "school mode" to prevent internet browsing and gaming.

- **The "Earned Privilege" System:** A few parents suggested that older students (juniors and seniors) or those with finished classwork and good academic standing should be allowed phone access, arguing we should teach them responsible adult habits rather than treating them like children.

5. Looking at the "Bigger Picture"

Finally, several parents urged the district to look beyond just cell phones and address the broader digital environment:

"This policy should be reexamined to extend beyond just student cell phone use to examine the impacts of all technology in the classroom, including the outsourcing of teaching to ineffective technology, and increased screen time."

Parents expressed concern over the "addictive loop" of classroom Chromebooks, default AI tools, and the decline of traditional reading and writing skills. They hope the school will pair any phone policy with active education on digital citizenship, impulse control, and the addictive design of modern social media.

May - Staff

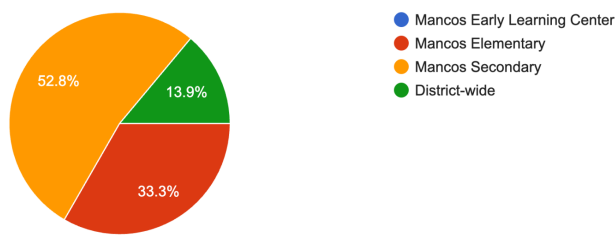
Parent Survey Cell Phone Survey

May 2026

36 responses

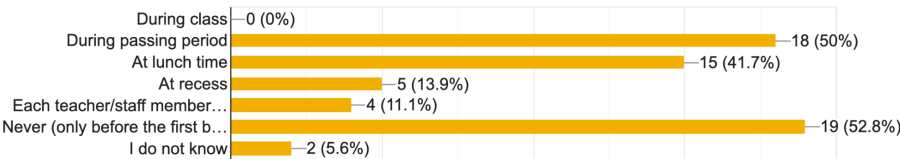
What school do you primarily work in?

36 responses



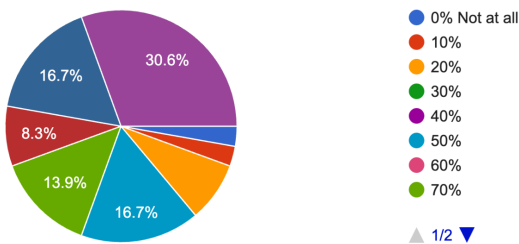
Under your school's phone policy, when are students allowed to use their phones at school? Select all that apply.

36 responses



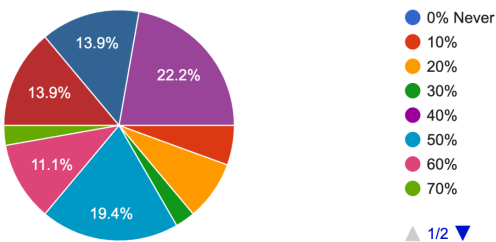
Overall, how satisfied are you with your school's phone policy?

36 responses



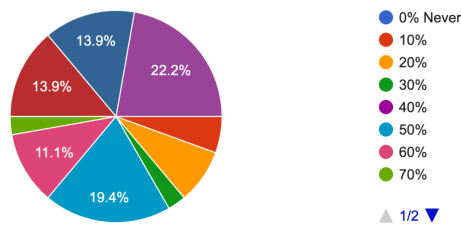
How consistently do teachers and staff enforce your school's cell phone policy? Give your best guess.

36 responses



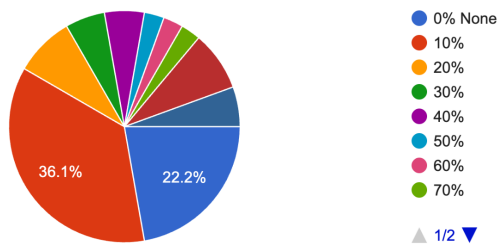
How consistently do teachers and staff enforce your school's cell phone policy? Give your best guess.

36 responses



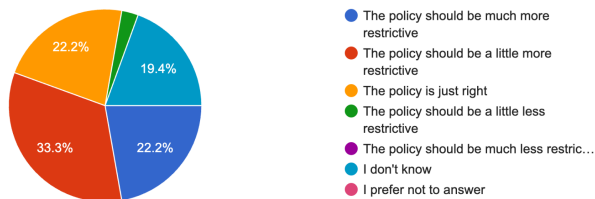
What percentage of your students are using their phone when they shouldn't be? Give your best guess.

36 responses



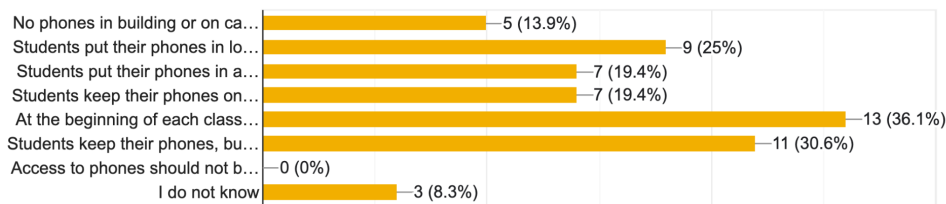
In your opinion, should your school's phone policy be more or less restrictive than it is now?

36 responses



How should our school restrict access to phones? Select all that apply.

36 responses



- No phones in building or on campus
- Students put their phones in locked boxes/lockers in a central location at the beginning of the day
- Students put their phones in a bag/container at the beginning of the school day
- Students keep their phones on their person in a locked pouch (such as a Yondr)
- At the beginning of each class phones are collected and stored in a charging cubby, and returned at the end of class
- Students keep their phones, but phones must be out of sight ('no-show')
- Access to phones should not be restricted

Open Responses (Synthesized by Gemini AI)

What challenges have you faced with implementing and/or enforcing the phone policy?

The feedback from teachers regarding the challenges of enforcing the school's cell phone policy reveals a deep divide between elementary, middle, and high school levels. While elementary teachers report virtually no issues, middle and high school teachers are facing an uphill battle characterized by emotional fatigue, sneakiness, and a lack of unified staff effort.

Here is a synthesis of the key challenges teachers have identified:

1. The Consistency Crisis (Staff Division)

By far, the most prominent challenge cited by teachers is the lack of unified enforcement across the faculty.

- "If One Fails, We All Fail": Multiple educators pointed out that the policy is only as good as its weakest link. When some teachers allow "free phone time" or look the other way, it undermines the teachers who strictly enforce the rules.
- The High School Laxity: Teachers noted a stark difference between buildings, observing that the high school is much more lax. Middle school teachers expressed frustration seeing high schoolers openly using phones in hallways and classrooms.
- Avoidance of Conflict: Some teachers admit they don't want to enforce it because they want to avoid a power struggle, while others are simply not monitoring closely enough to notice infractions.

2. Sneakiness and "Clandestine" Use

Teachers feel they are playing a constant game of cat-and-mouse with students who have become highly adept at hiding their devices.

- Bathroom and Hallway Loopholes: The restroom has become the primary "safe zone" for phone use. Teachers report students frequently asking to use the restroom just to check their screens, or lingering in the hallways during passing periods.
- Subtle Classroom Hiding: Students have learned to hide phones under desks, behind Chromebook screens, or use decoy/old phones to turn in while keeping their real device in their pocket.
- Smartwatches: Several teachers highlighted that smartwatches have emerged as a massive distraction, allowing students to text and receive notifications undetected right on their wrists.

3. Teacher Burnout and Instructional Disruptions

For teachers who *do* enforce the policy, the mental and emotional toll is exhausting.

- "Babysitting" vs. Teaching: Teachers express frustration over having to spend valuable class time constantly policing screens. One teacher noted that pausing class to confiscate a phone creates a disruption that ultimately punishes the students who are paying attention and want to learn.

- The Exhaustion of Enforcing: Constantly asking students to put phones away is described as "exhausting," leading some teachers to simply give up and focus only on the students who are actively engaged.

4. Philosophical Conflicts and Internal Guilt

Some teachers are struggling with their own conflicting beliefs about how to prepare students for the real world.

- Banning vs. Mentoring: A few educators expressed that simply locking phones away doesn't teach digital literacy or impulse control. They feel torn because they want to teach students *how* to wield technology responsibly rather than just acting as wardens.
- Empathy for the "Why": One teacher pointed out that phone use is often a coping mechanism: "When people pull out their phones... it is usually because we are bored and need stimulation, we are over-stimulated and are dissociating and trying to regulate, or we have an urgent need that needs to be met."

5. Lack of External and Administrative Support

Enforcement is made significantly harder when teachers feel they are fighting the battle alone.

- Parental Interference: Teachers report that parents are frequently the ones texting and calling their children during the school day, and some parents get angry at the school when their child doesn't respond immediately.
- The "Repeat Offender" Loop: Teachers note a lack of follow-up discipline. When the same students repeatedly break the rules without facing escalating, long-term consequences, the policy loses its teeth.

Do you have any suggestions for overcoming those barriers? (Synthesized with Gemini AI)

The suggestions from teachers on how to improve the school's cell phone policy focus heavily on taking the burden of "babysitting" off individual educators, standardizing consequences, and shifting to more structural, physical solutions to eliminate the daily classroom struggle.

Here is a synthesis of the key recommendations and ideas proposed by the teaching staff:

1. Physical and Structural Containment

Many teachers feel the current "out of sight" policy is a failure because it relies on the honor system. They propose moving to physical containment strategies to eliminate the temptation entirely.

- **Classroom Collection ("Phone Spas" or Cubbies):** Several teachers suggested having a dedicated, visible container or charging cubby in each classroom. Students would place their phones there at the start of class. One teacher noted this container should be portable so it can be easily grabbed in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- **Locked Pouches:** A few teachers advocated for signal-blocking locked pouches (like Yondr), noting that phone addiction has become so overwhelming that physical bricking is the only way to stop surreptitious use, bluetooth pairing, and constant distraction.

- **Day-Start Collection:** Some suggested a total school-day check-in at the morning bell, though others cautioned that managing and tracking who did or didn't turn in their phone shouldn't become yet another administrative chore for staff.

2. Holding Staff Accountable to the Policy

Teachers were blunt about the fact that policy failure often starts with the adults. They suggest implementing measures to ensure 100% staff compliance.

- **Consequences for Non-Enforcement:** Multiple teachers suggested that staff members who do not enforce the policy should face disciplinary action or administrative follow-up.
- **Eliminating "Teacher Discretion" Loopholes:** To prevent students from playing teachers against one another, many advocate for a strict "across-the-board" policy that removes individual teacher prerogative, thereby eliminating the inconsistency that students exploit.

3. Clear, Standardized, and Escalating Consequences

To reduce the classroom power struggle, teachers want a highly structured, predictable discipline path.

- **No-Tolerance First Offenses:** Teachers want a consistent discipline plan where even a first offense has a guaranteed consequence, removing the gray area of "warnings."
- **Parent-Student Contracts:** For repeat offenders, teachers suggest implementing strict behavior contracts signed by both the student and their parents, potentially resulting in the complete loss of on-campus phone privileges.

4. Community Education and "Buying In"

Rather than just handing down new rules, teachers believe the school needs to actively educate families on *why* these changes are necessary.

- **Share the Data:** Teachers suggest hosting a presentation for students, staff, and parents featuring hard statistics and scientific research on the negative impact of cell phones on youth brain development and learning.
- **Set Family Expectations:** The school should actively engage with parents to establish clear boundaries regarding how families can help at home, including urging parents to stop texting their children during instructional time.

Summary of the Tension

Ultimately, the feedback highlights a desire for a **"cold turkey" or highly structured physical ban** (such as class cubbies or locked pouches) to relieve teachers of the exhausting task of policing pockets, paired with strict administrative backing to ensure both students and staff are held completely accountable.

Additional Comments (Synthesized with AI)

The final, open-ended comments from teachers carry a tone of deep concern, urgency, and moral responsibility. Across these responses, teachers describe cell phone addiction not just as a classroom

management issue, but as a broader crisis affecting student mental health, brain development, and social well-being.

Here is a synthesis of the overarching themes from their final thoughts:

1. A Moral Obligation for Student Well-Being

Multiple teachers framed a strict phone policy not as a punishment, but as an act of care. They feel the school has a duty to protect students from the documented harms of constant connectivity.

- The "Great Rewiring" Perspective: One teacher specifically highlighted the impact of Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation*, noting that researching the science behind youth phone addiction "saddened" them. They argued that providing a mandatory, daily break from screens is necessary for students' educational, mental, and physical health.
- A Future Perspective: There is a strong feeling among staff that failing to act now will be looked back upon as a massive systemic failure:
- *"If we don't act now, I think we'll look back on this time in 10-15 years and wonder what we were thinking."*
- Brain Development: Teachers emphasized that young brains are still growing, and constant screen time is actively detrimental to healthy cognitive development.

2. Calls for a Total Campus Ban

Several comments argued that the school should bypass partial, complicated rules and transition to a complete ban on personal devices.

- A Necessary Transition: While acknowledging that a total ban would be a "difficult transition at first," teachers believe the campus culture would be vastly superior once the adjustment period passed.
- Systemic Failure of the Current Approach: One teacher voiced extreme frustration, suggesting that because parents haven't managed device boundaries at home and teachers haven't enforced them consistently at school, the only logical solution is to ban phones from campus entirely.

3. Strict, Parent-Involved Consequences

For any policy to work, teachers feel the leniency and "multiple warnings" loop must stop.

- Zero-Tolerance Rules: Teachers are advocating for a direct, zero-tolerance consequence structure.
- Parent Pick-Up Only: A popular recommendation is that if a student is caught with their phone, it goes straight to the front office. Crucially, the phone should not be given back to the student at the end of the day. Instead, a parent must physically come to the school to retrieve it, ensuring families are forced to address the infraction directly.

4. Appreciation and Realism

Finally, teachers expressed gratitude for the administration's willingness to tackle this issue, while remaining realistic about the resources needed to succeed.

- Consistently Resourced: A recurring point was that any new policy is dead on arrival unless the administration provides teachers with the clear backing, resources, and administrative support to enforce it every single day.

June - Draft 1 Feedback

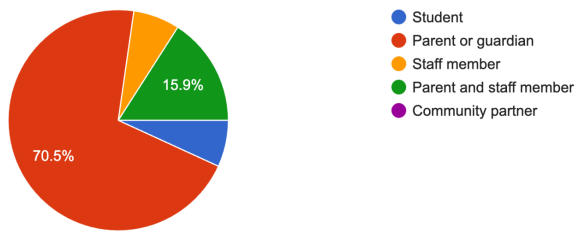
Draft 1 Feedback

June 2026

44 responses

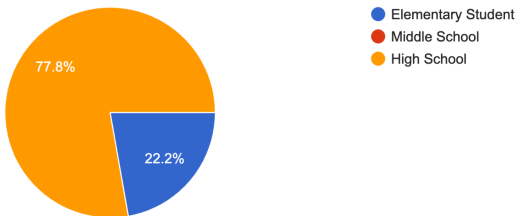
What is your role at Mancos School District?

44 responses



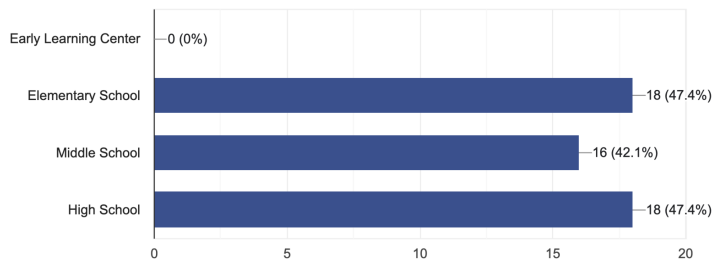
If you are a student, what school will you attend this August?

9 responses



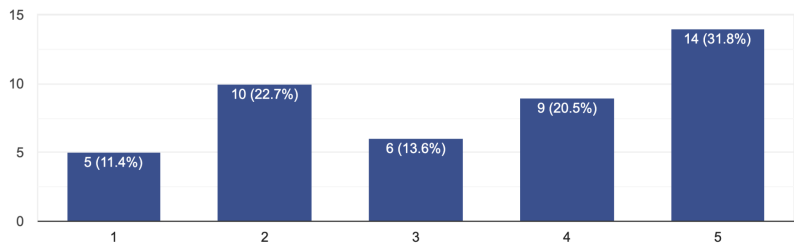
If you are a parent or guardian, what school(s) does your child(ren) attend?

38 responses



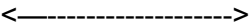
What is your level of approval of this drafted plan?

44 responses



highly approve

highly disapprove



What do you appreciate about the current draft (Draft 1)? *(Synthesis supported by Gemini AI)*

"Here is a synthesis of the feedback regarding what stakeholders like about the current draft of the cell phone policy and guidelines.

Overall, the community is highly supportive of the district taking proactive steps to address classroom distractions, though there is a clear divide between those who favor a strict, total lock-up policy and those who worry about over-regulation and communication."

Key Themes of Support

1. Relief from Temptation and Increased Focus

*The most common thread of praise is the **restoration of a distraction-free learning environment.***

- **Mental Break:** *Parents and staff appreciate that taking phones away relieves students of the constant social pressure and the "under-the-desk" temptation to check notifications.*
- **Peer Interaction:** *Several noted that restricting phones—especially during passing periods—forces students to actually talk to each other, go to the bathroom, and arrive at class ready to learn.*
- **Sanctuary Spaces:** *Strong support was voiced for banning devices in private areas like **bathrooms and locker rooms.***

2. Shifting the Burden of Enforcement

A major win for many respondents is how the policy protects teachers.

- **Staff Relief:** *By establishing clear, school-wide rules (and locking devices away), teachers are freed from the exhausting daily role of "phone police."*
- **Clear Consequences:** *Respondents appreciated that the draft outlines severe consequences where **administrators/deans step in immediately**, rather than leaving the discipline entirely up to classroom teachers.*

3. Smart, Tiered Structure

*The **layered approach** tailored to different developmental stages received high marks.*

- **Age-Appropriate Limits:** *Respondents favor the strict "no phones" stance for elementary and middle schoolers, and the discouragement of devices for students in 3rd grade and under.*
- **Balanced High School Rules:** *Many appreciated the compromise of keeping phones locked during class but allowing access during **lunch in high school** to maintain a sense of autonomy.*
- **Smartwatch Restrictions:** *There is specific support for including smartwatches in the ban to close loopholes.*

4. Communication Workarounds

- *Multiple parents expressed appreciation for the explicit mention of **using email** or other designated channels as a reliable way to send quick updates to their kids during the day without needing direct text access.*

Notable Hesitations & Areas for Improvement

Even when asked what they liked, several respondents used the opportunity to highlight critical concerns with the current draft:

- **Symptom vs. Root Cause:** *A few respondents noted that phone bans only mask the issue of student disengagement. They argued the focus should instead be on **dynamic instruction and teaching responsible technology use.***

- **Overreach on Other Devices:** There is pushback regarding the ban on **smartwatches and personal laptops**, with parents noting that school-issued Chromebooks are often insufficient for high schoolers taking advanced or college-level courses.
- **The "All-or-Nothing" Dilemma:** Some worry the tiered system and various "exceptions" will create loopholes, viewings of favoritism, and heavy administrative execution costs.
- **Safety & Contact:** A minority of respondents strongly oppose the policy, stating they want **direct, immediate phone access** to their children at all times.

What are your questions and/or concerns with the current draft? (Synthesis supported by Gemini AI)

While the community widely agrees that cell phone distractions are a major hurdle in schools, this draft of the policy has raised significant anxiety and logistical questions. Stakeholders are highly concerned about **how** this policy will actually work on a day-to-day basis, with worries ranging from administrative bottlenecks to student safety.

1. The Logistical "Bottleneck" & Device Security

The most common and practical concern is the physical management of checking hundreds of high-value devices in and out.

- **The Morning & Afternoon Rush:** Parents and students worry that a single check-in/check-out station will create massive bottlenecks. Will this cause students to be late to first period, miss their buses, or lose half of their lunch break just waiting in line?
- **Liability and Theft:** Many are uncomfortable handing over devices worth up to \$1,000 to "random cupboards with a lock." Parents are asking: Who is financially liable if a phone is lost, damaged, or given to the wrong student?
- **Multi-Building Campus Issues:** At the secondary level, students move between different buildings. A single lockup location is physically impractical and raises questions about staffing and student flow.

2. Emergency Communication & Safety Concerns

For many parents, taking away direct access to their children feels like a safety hazard.

- **The "Football Field" Scenario:** Multiple parents recalled a past incident where the school was evacuated to the football field. Because the building was empty, office phones went unanswered. Parents only knew their children were safe because of personal cell phones or smartwatches.
- **Unresponsive Front Offices:** Parents note that calling the front office is already a "hit-or-miss" experience, with busy signals and unreturned voicemails. They argue that if phones are locked away, the district must guarantee a flawless, live communication pipeline for time-sensitive family updates.
- **Anxiety and Mental Health:** Some parents emphasize that their children rely on their phones (kept silent in backpacks) as a safety net to manage severe anxiety.

3. Consistency and Staff Accountability

A policy is only as good as its enforcement, and stakeholders are skeptical about whether it will be applied fairly.

- **"Practice What You Preach":** Several respondents pointed out that teachers and administrators are frequently seen using their personal phones during school hours. They argue that adults must model the behavior expected of students.
- **Uneven Enforcement:** There is concern that some teachers will ignore the policy while others enforce it strictly, leading to students viewing the rules as unfair or targeted.
- **The Burden on Staff:** Managing cabinet keys, policing sneaky students, and handling discipline adds massive clerical and administrative tasks to a staff that is already stretched thin.

4. Debating the "Lunch Exception" & Middle School Rules

The specific rules for different age groups are causing friction:

- **The Lunch Hour Hassle (High School):** While some support the lunch break compromise, others think retrieving and re-depositing phones for a 30-minute lunch is a logistical nightmare. Some advocate for a 100% phone-free day, while others think high schoolers should keep their phones during passing periods.
- **Middle School Autonomy:** Respondents question why middle schoolers are lumped in with 4th and 5th graders. They suggest a "stepping stone" approach, such as allowing middle schoolers to briefly check messages at lunch without taking their phones out of the storage room.
- **Medical & IEP Accommodations:** Stakeholders are curious how the district will handle exceptions (e.g., continuous glucose monitors for diabetes) without making those students targets of perceived "favoritism."

5. Symptom vs. Root Cause

Finally, a philosophical concern remains: **Are we teaching kids how to live in the digital age?**

- Rather than a flat ban, some suggest the school should focus on keeping classrooms highly engaging so students don't want to look at their phones.
- Critics of the ban suggest the district should focus on teaching **responsible, self-regulated digital citizenship** rather than implementing a "police state" model.

Additional Comments (Synthesis supported by Gemini AI)

"Here is a synthesis of the **Additional Comments** section from the survey.

This feedback reveals a community weighing the cultural shift of a phone-free school. While there is strong, emotional gratitude from some parents (including medical professionals) who view this as a vital step for youth mental health, there is deep skepticism regarding **legal boundaries, transition strategies, policy comparisons, and staff accountability.**"

1. Legal, Trust, and Property Boundaries

A few parents voiced intense concern regarding the physical seizure and locking away of student property.

- **Legal and Parental Rights:** One respondent explicitly raised concerns regarding federal laws about taking and locking up personal property, stating, "I bought, pay for, and send my child with what I find necessary."
- **Lack of Trust:** There is a stated lack of trust in school staff, coaches, and administrators to safely handle and respect students' high-value personal property.

2. Calls for a "Soft Launch" and Transition Support

Understanding that going "from one extreme to another" will cause friction, stakeholders offered constructive ideas to ease the transition:

- **The "Get Out of Trouble Free" Card:** One innovative suggestion is to issue each student a physical, named grace card at the start of the year. For their first offense, they can turn in the card instead of their phone, preventing immediate conflict while maintaining a central ledger so students can't abuse the grace period across different classes.
- **A Two-Week Grace Period:** Others suggested a formal, two-week "soft launch" with constant reminders from deans and principals before strict disciplinary measures are enforced.
- **Parent Information Night:** Suggestions were made to host a dedicated parent night to clearly align expectations before day one.

3. Clearer Policy Comparisons & Communication Logistics

Respondents requested more transparent data and clearer explanations of the draft's mechanics:

- **"What Actually Changed?":** Parents are asking for a direct side-by-side comparison. They want to know exactly how this draft differs from the old policy (e.g., Is the main difference just the locked cabinets and harsher discipline? Is it stricter or more flexible?).
- **Wanting to See Peer Feedback:** There is strong interest in seeing the raw survey results from the students themselves to understand their perspective.
- **The Email Dilemma:** Parents pointed out a potential loophole in the "email your student" communication plan. If students are using school-issued laptops to check emails, how will staff distinguish between actual parent communication and distracting screen time? There are also concerns about student privacy regarding sensitive family emails read on school screens.

4. Adult Accountability & "Double Standards"

A recurring theme is that students will not respect a policy that the adults in the room do not follow.

- **Staff Discipline:** Respondents asked what the consequences are for staff members who use their phones in front of students, or teachers who leniently allow "exceptions" in their classrooms.
- **Consistency Concerns:** Multiple comments noted that current rules (like the dress code) are enforced incredibly unevenly. Parents fear that if some teachers ignore the phone policy, the entire handbook loses its authority.

5. Strong Philosophical Support vs. "Trust-Based" Alternatives

The emotional spectrum of the comments ranges from deep gratitude to calls for a more nuanced approach:

- **The Mental Health Perspective:** A medical doctor and parent strongly endorsed the lockup, citing the engineered, addictive nature of apps and the massive toll they take on adolescent attention spans and social-emotional development.
- **Earned Trust Model:** Conversely, one respondent suggested a counselor-style approach: start by granting students trust to handle their devices responsibly, and only revoke the privilege (locking the phone away) once that trust is broken.