

MANN MIDDLE SCHOOL

1001 E. Van Buren
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
Telephone (719) 328-2300
Fax (719) 448-0354



February 20, 2019

Leah Segura, Principal
Alvin N. Brown, Assistant Principal
Sean DePaula, Assistant Principal
Lana Schymos, Coordinator, Student Services

Dear Mann Middle School Families,

The administration and staff at Mann Middle School has recently agreed to adopt a new cell phone policy. Our change in policy is in alignment with the direction several other middle school in D11 and the surrounding area have already made. Please review the attached documents supporting and explaining the rationale for this change. Effective Monday, February 25, 2019, student cell phone access and usage in school from the time the first bell rings at 8:35am until dismissal at 3:45pm is prohibited. I encourage you to read the “Cell Phone Policy FAQ” document attached to this letter for information that explains more about the specific details of our policy. We acknowledge there can be positive uses of cell phones in the classroom. However, our experience working with youth has shown us that the cons outweigh the pros when it comes to cell phone usage in the school. We want our students’ focus to be on what their job is designed to be when coming to school – being a student.

Our two main priorities at Mann Middle School are school safety and student achievement. The decision to prohibit the use of cell phones at school will help us with each of these priorities. The social-emotional well-being of our students is an important piece of school safety. Research shows that anxiety, addiction, and social avoidance are all issues that increase when adolescents have access to cell phones. Our goal at school is to set our kids up for success. Look no further than a middle school cafeteria at lunch to see the impact cell phones are having on our kids. The social avoidance behaviors and reliance on a cell phone is counterproductive to our goal of equipping our students for the future.

Currently, our students have been able to have their phones with them at all times. Many students can’t resist the urge to see what is on their phone during instruction instead of giving their undivided attention to the lesson. Research shows that even when a student isn’t viewing their phone, they can be distracted by wondering what they are missing on their phone. Add the amount of time teachers spend redirecting students about cell phone use in class, and it becomes an issue that impacts the learning of an entire class, not just the student in possession of the phone.

Here are just a few examples of the issues we deal with daily when it comes to student cell phone use:

- ✓ Students texting during class.
- ✓ Parents texting or calling students during class.
- ✓ Students taking pictures or videos of people without permission and posting it on social media.
- ✓ Cyberbullying.
- ✓ Students are pretending to conduct research for an assignment who are actually doing something else on their phone.

Knowing the negative impact cell phones have on our kids has resulted in our decision to update our school-wide policy.

I want to make sure you know that we completely understand the legitimate reasons for a middle school student to have a cell phone. It makes sense to want to get a text message or phone call from your student when they leave or arrive at a destination to know they are safe. That part doesn't have to change for you under this policy. The course of action is to make a plan by telling your student to send a text or give you a call right before they come into the building. If you have an emergency message for your student, call the main office at 328-2300. We have student assistants who can deliver messages to classrooms. The other option is to text your student knowing they will see the message at 3:45pm. In an emergency (death in the family, severe illness, accident, etc.), your student may be called down to the office to make or receive a phone call from or to you.

I appreciate your support in keeping student learning and school safety as the primary focus at Mann Middle School. Our goal is your student's success, and we are confident this change in policy is a giant step in the right direction based on our research, observations, and everyday interactions with students. Thank you for your continued support of the Mann Middle School community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leah Segura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "L" and "S".

Leah Segura
Principal