

Stout Middle School

Wednesday, September 11th, 2019



Dear Stout Families,

We would like to inform you about some changes we will be implementing at Stout Middle School this Fall. We are excited about these changes and look forward to your support as we feel they will positively impact a high-quality learning environment that is focused on student success. In today's fast-paced global community, technology has become an embedded element of our culture. However, with the use of technology, comes a high-level of self-regulation and independence that we feel our students are developmentally still learning to establish. At the middle school level, cell phones have become increasingly problematic and have led to conflicts that are harmful to students' academic, social/emotional needs, and most importantly their safety. We have decided as a building, that in order to prioritize our student's needs and promote their growth through high-quality learning, we will be enforcing a new cell phone policy for the 2019-2020 school year.

Before we share the policy with you, we would like you to know that our decision is based on numerous studies and research that have concluded that cell phone use in adolescents have negative impacts and effects, some of which are irreversible which include: memory function, ability to focus or maintain attention, brain stamina, self-regulation behaviors, hyperactivity, self-confidence and anxiety issues, and irritability and mood disorders, to name a few. It is hard to ignore these recent studies, however, we also understand that cell phones may be an essential form of communication for some of our students. While we strongly recommend that you do not provide a cell phone to your child until they are in high school, we know many of our students already have their own device. In order to respect decisions made by families but still emphasize the importance of creating and supporting a healthy school environment conducive to learning, we will be adopting the "Away for the Day" policy.

The "Away for the Day" Policy states that:

Stout Middle School recognizes the importance of communication and collaboration and provides electronic devices for students to utilize in the classroom. To maintain a focus on academics, technology use will be limited to devices provided by the teacher: including chrome books, ipads, kindles, etc. With regards to cell phones, Stout Middle School will enforce the following:

- **Cell phones and mobile devices MUST be turned off in the building upon entering and may not be turned on until exiting the building**

- Cell phones and mobile devices **MUST** be kept in lockers -- not in clothing or backpacks.
- Cell phones and mobile devices are **PROHIBITED** from being used in locker rooms or restrooms.
- Cell phones **MAY** be used only in classrooms as directed by a teacher who has provided permission for them to be used to support academic purpose.

We recognize that this is a new policy this year and we have provided ample time for students to familiarize themselves with this through verbal redirections and warnings. However, if the policy is violated after this information is shared publicly with students and parents, the following consequences will take place:

1st Violation: Student will be asked to surrender cell phone and can pick it up themselves at the end of the school day.

2nd Violation: Student will be asked to surrender cell phone and it must be picked up by a parent/legal guardian at the end of the school day.

3rd Violation: Student will be asked to surrender cell phone. Parent/legal guardian may pick up the cell phone after student has served a detention after school for two hours.

4th Violation: Student will be asked to surrender cell phone for 5 consecutive school days. Parent/legal guardian will then be asked to attend a meeting with an administrator to establish a technology contract for the student that all parties agree to.

Our main office is here to support families. We make every effort to ensure **important** communication takes place when necessary. Please continue to use the main office to communicate to your child, sending messages or calling them during the school day is counterproductive and does not support our commitment to a high-quality learning environment. We encourage you to do your own research and seek out the following resources to support our policy. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to either administrator at Stout. We look forward to a successful year, one that is focused on growth and high levels of learning for ALL students.

<https://betterscreentime.com/is-my-teen-ready-for-a-cell-phone/>

<https://www.psych.com/cell-phone-internet-addiction>

<https://kidsnclicks.com/>

<https://time.com/5555737/smartphone-mental-health-teens/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/12/11/phone-addiction-is-real-and-so-are-its-mental-health-risks/#5f74f85913df>

Mr. Gregory Oke, Principal

Mrs. Hanaa Faraj, Assistant Principal