



COPE MIDDLE SCHOOL

A California Gold Ribbon School

“SOARing to Success.”

2022-2023

Cell Phone Policy Change

In 2021-2022, the Cope Electronic Devices/Cell Phone Policy as listed in the Student Handbook read as follows:

Student possession on campus of any electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, iPads, AirPods, ear buds etc.) is strongly discouraged. If students choose to bring these items to school, they must be turned off during class hours. Any use of these devices during class hours will result in their confiscation unless specifically directed by the teacher for academic purposes during class. First offense: Student is allowed to pick-up the electronic device after school. Second offense: a parent or guardian must pick up the item from the Student Center. Continued violation of this policy will result in further consequences.

During the school year, Cope experienced numerous incidents of cell phone cyberbullying, threats to students and staff, and unwanted videotaping of fights or individual students or staff members. Cell phones were at the center of many student issues involving gossip, relationship drama, and mean or inappropriate language/behaviors. These incidents all took away from the academic integrity of the classroom and impacted the overall positive campus culture the staff at Cope was trying to reinforce.

After much discussion, the Cope Middle School Staff decided to make Cope a cell phone-free campus, like the other middle schools in the RUSD. This means students are no longer allowed to have their cell phones out once they enter campus. **Students will be expected to have their phones silenced and put away in their backpacks during the entire school day.** Teachers will maintain the discretion to have students use cell phones in their individual classes for educational purposes only, and students may do so only with teacher permission.

The 2022-2023 Cope Electronic Devices/Cell Phone Policy as listed in the Student-Family Handbook reads as follows:

We recognize that many parents rely on cell phones to communicate with their children and that students use smart watches to gain access to social media. However, both situations are a distraction to the educational learning environment. The following guidelines are in place to address cell phone/smart watch/electronic device usage:

- 1. Student possession on campus of any electronic devices (i.e., cell phones, smart watches, iPods, iPads, AirPods, ear buds etc.) is strongly discouraged. If students choose to bring these items to school, they should be silenced and should be in a backpack at all times. “If we don’t see it or hear it, we don’t know you have it.” Electronic devices may **NOT** be used during school hours for any reason.*
- 2. In the morning cell phones and other electronic devices should be put away before coming on campus; if we see devices being used, they will be confiscated. This includes looking at the time, checking messages – including messages from parents, etc.*
- 3. At the end of the day, once the bell rings and students leave the classroom, phones may be used to contact families.*
- 4. **Violations of these guidelines will result in confiscation.** Confiscated items will be kept in the Student Center for pick up by the student (1st offense) or by the parent/guardian (2nd offense).*
- 5. There may be times at school when students are given permission to use a phone (i.e., classroom, special activity). Guidelines must be followed exactly as stated. Good judgment must be used keeping in mind privacy laws. Using a phone to video other students/adults can be an invasion of privacy. If students violate “bullying” or harassment/intimidation laws, they are subject to consequences specified by the CA. Education code and/or other criminal violations*
- 6. Cell phones are always a target for theft. It is a student’s responsibility to secure the cell phone, smart watch, or other electronic devices at all times, as the school cannot take responsibility, nor are we required to conduct an investigation, if items are missing or stolen.*
- 7. NOTE: Education Code 48901.5, AB 272 became effective January 1, 2020 and explicitly authorizes the governing body of a school district to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones while the pupils are at school site or while pupils are under the supervision of an employee or employees of that school district.*