

By Carolyn Lee

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Although there haven't been many violations of cell phone use by students at Chase County Schools so far this semester, administrators agree that reviewing the policy is a good idea.

High School Principal Mike Sorensen said he's "had to deal with two students so far, who were checking text messages." Sorensen said that, according to policy, he took the students' phones and talked with them after school.

Elementary Principal Nathan Vitosh said he hasn't heard of any problems yet. "Typically, we don't see too many issues. I'm not aware of any incidences in the elementary school this year."

Sorensen said that students are able to use i-Chat on their new MacBook laptops to communicate with other students. "A lot of kids use them to communicate during school when the teachers give permission, and out of school," he noted.

"I don't think we have the problems (with cell phones) some schools do because of our technology," he added.

Sorensen also pointed out that students are given permission to use cell phones when faced with a personal emergency such as an illness in the family.

The school policy is that cell phones may not be used in school except before and after school and during the noon hour. See the accompanying policy for more detail.

If a student is caught using a cell phone at other times, it will be confiscated and returned after school for a first violation. If another violation occurs, the phone will be confiscated and a parent must pick up the phone at school.

Sorensen said cell phones are private property, and the school can't confiscate them for good. He asks students to use good judgment in their use.

Interestingly enough, the biggest problem with cell phone use in the school, he said, is parents texting or calling students during class time.

Teachers are not supposed to use cell phones during the instructional time at school, Vitosh stated. They may use them during their planning time, free time or in times of a family emergency.

Use of telephone/cell phones

As a general policy, students are discouraged from using the telephone except before and after school and during the noon hour. Students will not be allowed to use school phones except in cases of extreme emergency. A public phone is located in the lobby area for student use. Students are not called to the telephone except in emergency cases and at the request of parents. Students are encouraged to turn off their cell phones in the school building during school hours. If students do use their cell phones without permission during school hours they will be in violation. First offense: students will have their cell phone confiscated and will be allowed to receive the phone at the end of the day. For the second offense: parents will be called by student; parents will be required to come to the office to receive their child's cell phone.

—From the 2009-10 CCS student handbook

