

# 2024-25 SWOS Phone Guideline Changes and FAQ

Dear SWOS Students Parents, Guardians, Family and Community Members,

In an effort to support our students with their academic and social growth and to uplift our classrooms and campus, we will be significantly changing our cell phone policy for next school year. This decision was arrived at through staff feedback, behavior data, student data, and research on the negative impacts of cell phones on our students' mental health, academic and social development, and school learning environments. Next school year, SWOS will adopt a "Cell Phone Free" class time procedure.

There are many resources out there that discuss the impacts of cell phones on youth. One of which is **The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness** by Jonathan Haidt

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns with regard to the new cell phone procedures for next school year, please feel free to contact Joe Kelly, the Director of Student Services, at ext. 1013 or [jkelly@cortez.k12.co.us](mailto:jkelly@cortez.k12.co.us).

Sincerely,  
SWOS Staff

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## What are the new phone rules?

- We will release the exact procedures for this change at some point in the summer before school begins in mid August. Next school year, SWOS will adopt a "Cell Phone Free" class time procedure.

## Why is this changing?

- Smartphones are an intricate, useful, powerful and unavoidable part of being a person in our world right now.
- Because smartphones were not widely adopted until the late 2000's, there is much we do not know about how they affect us, our children, our relationships, and our communities. As a result, we are all subjects in an unprecedented experiment with the use and dependency we all have on our smartphones.
- While there is much we do not know, the current research points to smartphones and social media significantly increasing the risk of adolescent depression, anxiety, bullying, suicide and self harm as well as causing poor sleep, low self esteem, a loss in productivity, focus, and the development of skills essential to school, relationships, work, and life.
- As a result of this evidence, we see it as a duty to our students and our world to create an environment with a culture that is best for students learning how to manage their phone use so they can more fully focus on school work and essential life skills development.

## Don't kids need to learn how to manage their phone use rather than have it taken away?

- Yes! Smart phones are not going anywhere and we all need to learn and model how to manage them and their effect on our mental, social and community health which is precisely why we think this is the best course of action. In our experience, the majority of students are not using their phones for academic purposes in classes, but for personal reasons. There are few if any cell phone free environments in our lives and we want to communicate clearly to our students that when it comes to academic, work, and social success, there should be few, if any distractions.

## How will parents contact their children if they cannot look at their phone?

- In the event there is an emergency, as always, you can contact our main office line. Students who own phones, can be in possession of their phones, and the schedule will allow for short periods of time throughout the day when you and your student can communicate. We appreciate your support allowing class time to be devoted to their progress.

## What if there is a crisis at the school and I need to check to make sure my kid is ok?

- If there is a crisis on campus, we want students present and listening to teachers and following directions to keep everyone safe, not calling and texting parents and being distracted with phones.
- Every student texting their loved ones different information in a crisis can be confusing and dangerous when we are still responding and assessing the situation on campus.
- Students can still have their phones on campus and when appropriate the school staff in charge will let them know in a crisis situation when it is appropriate for them to reach out.