

JP PHONE POLICY: A FAILED EXPERIMENT

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After a full year of the new phone policy, it has become apparent that this new rule is simply a bombastic solution to a nonexistent problem. At the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, students were now required to put their phones away while inside all academic buildings, and only allowed access during activity period and lunch, only while outside. Students have observed that this policy has created more problems than it has solved. Without access to phones, the communication gap between Prep students and the outside world (their tuition-paying parents) is rapidly expanding, making plan changes and important information difficult for students to obtain. This has been the cause of much confusion, and to what benefit? According to many students, less access to their phones has resulted in worse communication with their parents and siblings, which has caused problems for some families. For example, if a parent cannot come get their child from school and the student needs to ride home with a friend, the student is completely unaware of this plan change until after school. The student, parent, friend, and the friend's parent all have to rely on the already busy and hard working office to relay this information to the student. By allowing students to

once again access their phones in small increments between classes, it will cut out the middleman and result in much more efficient communication, all while taking loads of pressure off of the office. According to numerous students, the new phone policy has taken away a large sector of their "relaxation time" in their already busy life, filled with rigorous academics, full social lives, and strenuous sports practices. All in all, the phone policy has taken away from students' abilities to relax while in the already tense and stressful atmosphere of school. By taking away phone privileges inside buildings, the school has added another stressor to the already full plate of its hard-working students.

What's more, many students have not observed the potential positive changes in their daily lives that were emphasized and anticipated; in fact, the opposite effect of what was anticipated has occurred. Instead of being more disconnected from their devices generally because of lack of access during school hours, students have observed themselves being more active on their phones after school hours or outside during breaks than they were in previous years because of lack of access. This is a common occurrence— anyone who were to walk outside during activity period or lunch will witness crowds of students glued to their devices, as opposed to enjoying the out-

doors. Part of the reasoning behind the new phone policy was to get students to engage with each other more during breaks, but in reality students are engaging with each other less because they are focused on their devices instead. The policy was instituted because of claims that the cell phones were

the classroom at the beginning of the class. This was far more effective in preventing phone use, as it was the teacher's responsibility to ensure all phones were out of the students' possession during their class. Now, it is up to the student to confirm that their phone is out of sight. Because of this, phones

results in far more distraction than it would be if phones were kept at the front of the classroom, a far more effective strategy for reducing distractions.

A scientifically proven phenomenon called the "forbidden fruit effect" is especially apparent in this situation. This effect describes a situation in which someone cannot have something, so they are more attracted to it as a result. Because students are denied access to their phones, the desirability increases. This could explain why so many students have noticed an increase in their screen time and a decrease in their productivity outside of school— because once they get their phone back after 7 hours without, their focus is turned towards their device. It would be better for the productivity of the students to just have small doses of their cell phones while walking from class to class, rather than just one long binge session after school.

In an ideal world, the new phone policy would have a positive effect on students' lives, but unfortunately, human behavior is simply not as straightforward as we would like to think. Disappointing as it sounds, this is the reality of the world we live in today. Technology is the new era. Instead of suppressing it, it's time we embrace it and adapt to it, rather than attempting to cut it out completely.



distracting students from their schoolwork during class. Before the phone policy was instituted at the beginning of the school year, the rule in years past had been for all students to put their phones in a container or pocket in front of

are more easily accessible for students during class time because they are in their backpack, not at the front of the class with the teacher. The temptation to grab your phone sneakily is significantly higher than before. This