August 2019

Dear Team CMS Families,

As someone who has a degree in Instructional Technology, I value the significant contributions that technology tools can make to an instructional program. However, I am also fully aware of how technology, especially cell phones, can be distracting, and even detrimental, at times. Most of our students ensure cell phones are appropriately turned off and stored, as is our current policy. In other cases, student cell phone use at BCPS schools has resulted in:

- phone calls/texts interrupting the learning environment.
- bullying or disrespectful interactions via unwanted text messaging/sharing of photos.
- cell phones ringing during class, or becoming damaged, lost or stolen
- students demonstrating disrespect which negatively affects relationships and impacts learning

Now that we are 1:1 (1 student to 1 device), there is no educational reason to have cell phones in the classroom (or in school at all). Beginning this school year, students will not be permitted to bring cell phones into the classroom.

If parents choose to let their student bring a cell phone to school, the expectation will be that **cell phones are powered down and placed in lockers before going to first period at 8:15 am**. Students can take cell phones to lunch and return them to their lockers prior to their next class. If you have an urgent message for your child, we ask that you call the school office at 410-887-0803. Please know that CMS is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen devices, other than BCPS-issued laptop devices in specified circumstances.

The following protocol will assist us in enforcing this change, if a student brings a cell phone to class:

**First Offense:** The student will be instructed to put the cell phone in the locker. A verbal warning will be given to the student. The warning will be documented/tracked.

**Second Offense:** The student will be instructed to put the cell phone in the locker. The teacher will contact the parent and the communication will be documented/tracked.

**Third Offense:** The student will be instructed to put the cell phone in the locker and the student will be referred to an administrator who will contact his/her parent to determine additional interventions to effectively remedy the situation.

**Continued refusal to follow this policy** will be considered disrespect for school rules/disruptive behavior. Administrators will contact parents, implement additional loss of school privileges and/or consequences.

Our students achieve at a high level because we work together to limit disruptions to the instructional program. Thank you for your support of a learning-focused environment at Catonsville Middle School.

Sincerely,

Douglas C. Elmendorf, Ed.D.
Principal

*Raising the bar, Closing gaps, Preparing for our future*