

Student Ministries Cell Phone Policy

Purpose

We recognize that cell phones are a normal part of life and can be an important means for students and parents to communicate with one another. Students are therefore welcome to bring their cell phones with them to Youth Group.

At the same time, we want our weekly gatherings to be a time when students are able to give their attention to worship, the teaching of God's Word, fellowship, relationships, games, and other ministry activities without unnecessary distractions.

For that reason, our general expectation is simple:

Students may have their phones with them, but phones should remain put away during Youth Group unless there is a legitimate reason to use them.

Expectations for Students

While attending Youth Group:

1. **Cell phones should remain put away.**
Phones should ordinarily remain in a pocket, backpack, purse, or other appropriate location rather than being carried around or regularly checked.
2. **Students may use their phones to communicate with their parents when necessary.**
We never want this policy to prevent appropriate communication between parents and their children. If a student needs to contact a parent, or if a parent is attempting to reach his or her child, the student is welcome to use the phone.
3. **Students should not use their phones for entertainment or casual communication during Youth Group.**
This includes social media, games, videos, texting friends, taking unnecessary pictures or videos, or other activities that may distract the student or others from the ministry taking place.
4. **Students should put their phones away when asked by a leader.**
Our Student Ministries leaders will help reinforce this policy throughout the evening. If a phone becomes a distraction, a leader may simply ask the student to put it away.
5. **Exceptions may be made when appropriate.**
Students may use their phones when instructed by a leader, in an emergency, for an important family matter, or when another legitimate need arises.

Repeated Misuse

Our desire is not to create an unnecessarily restrictive environment, but to help students develop wisdom, self-control, consideration for others, and an ability to be fully present with the people around them.

If a student repeatedly disregards the cell phone policy after being reminded by leaders, the ministry leadership may speak with the student and his or her parents and determine an appropriate course of action. In some situations, a student may be asked to leave his or her phone with a leader for the remainder of the evening or to leave the phone at home for a period of time.

We want to handle these situations graciously and reasonably while also maintaining an environment that encourages meaningful participation in the ministry.

Partnership with Parents

We recognize that parents have the primary responsibility for the care and discipleship of their children, and we want this policy to support rather than interfere with that responsibility.

Parents are always welcome to contact their children when necessary. At the same time, we ask parents to help us by encouraging their students to keep their phones put away during Youth Group whenever possible.

We want students to learn to give appropriate attention to God's Word, engage meaningfully with other believers, participate wholeheartedly in the activities of the church, and cultivate the kind of self-control and wisdom that honors Christ.

Parent and Student Agreement

By participating in Student Ministries, both the parent and student acknowledge and agree to follow this Cell Phone Policy.

Student: I understand that I may bring my cell phone to Youth Group so that I can communicate with my parents when necessary, but I agree to keep my phone put away and refrain from using it unnecessarily during Student Ministries activities. I also agree to follow the direction of Student Ministries leaders regarding my phone.

Parent: I understand and support the Student Ministries Cell Phone Policy and will encourage my student to follow these expectations while participating in Youth Group.