

February 5, 2008

Subject: Change in Cell Phone Policy

Dear Chevy Chase Parents:

The leadership team has reflected on the issue of cell phones at Chevy Chase Elementary School. Post 911 has given all of us pause and brought safety to the forefront for our families. Also, the state of technology is changing and families now depend on quick communication between members. For this reason, we are amending the school's decision on having specific reasons and waivers for cell phone use. **This does not mean that the policy has changed.** It means that any student at Chevy Chase Elementary, with their parent's permission, may have a cell phone but must adhere to all parts of the policy. At school, we have phones in every room in the building and several long distance lines. There is absolutely no reason for a child to need their phone during school time. If a parent needs to get a message to their child, call the school. We have a phone in the hall by the office for students to call home before or after school. The office is always prepared to support students who need to contact a parent or guardian when a situation arises.

Students may contact their parents or receive messages while walking to or from school or at the bus stop. The only time a student will use their cell phone at school is with the permission of the teacher and the approval of an administrator. This will be for school emergencies only.

Montgomery County Regulation COG-RA, *Portable Communication Devices*, states that "middle and elementary school students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices on MCPS campuses during any part of the instructional day (8:30 – 4:15). **This means that no student may take their cell phone out on the school grounds or on the bus.** It is to be used off property only. Middle school students (6 th grade only) may possess or use portable communication devices during evening or weekend activities outside of the instructional day." This means that no cell phone should be turned on, used or seen during arrival, instructional time, recess, dismissal and CCES before/after school activities. The cell phone must be "turned off and out of sight." At CCES this means the device must be turned off, in the book bag and zipped in a pocket. It may not be carried around in a coat, purse, pants pocket, notebook, etc. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** No student may use this device in a manner that is profane, indecent, or obscene, disrupts the instructional program, or constitutes an invasion of privacy. Examples of this include, but are not limited to, photographs, videos, and internet access or text messages.

I am sending home a form that will let us know if the child has parental permission to have or not to have a cell phone here at Chevy Chase Elementary and that the policy has been clearly discussed with the family. A school waiver will no longer be necessary. It is our belief that the family will take on the responsibility of the cell phones. If **any** student is in possession or uses a portable communication device that does not follow our policy during the instructional day the phone will be confiscated immediately. MCPS policy states, "Any student who violates this regulation will be subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to parent conference, loss of privileges, detention and up to ten days suspension." I will take the phone away and only return it to the parent. The child's privilege for having a phone will be revoked for the rest of that school year. Our suggestion is that families clearly mark the cell phones. Many students have similar phones. Chevy Chase will not be responsible for lost or stolen phones.

I am asking for our parent community support. Please have a serious discussion with students on appropriate use of portable communication devices including the use of video/camera functions and internet access. Discuss the serious consequences for students not following MCPS regulations. I think

this is a very compassionate compromise and we hope that the students understand the privilege that have been given and with this comes responsibility.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. The CCES leadership team wants to thank you for always supporting a positive and cooperative learning environment and knows that the parent community will support us.

Jody L. Smith, Principal
Chevy Chase Elementary School

Chevy Chase Elementary School
Cell Phone Information and Permission

Please read the following, sign/date and return to your child's homeroom teacher by Friday, **February 15, 2008**. This will be kept on file for the 2007 - 2008 school year.

We have read the following letter in regards to MCPS regulation on portable communication devices in the elementary school setting. We understand the change in CCES policy and have had a discussion with our child (ren) who attends Chevy Chase Elementary School. We also understand the seriousness of the situation and have discussed the consequences with our child (ren).

_____ Our child (ren) **will not** have nor need a cell phone at Chevy Chase Elementary School.

_____ Our child (ren) **will** have a portable communication device at CCES and understands the policy and consequences.

Parent Signature

Print Name

Date

Student (s) Signature #1

Print Name (s)

Date

Student #1 Cell Phone Number: _____

Student (s) Signature #2

Print Name (s)

Date

Student #2 Cell Phone Number: _____

ALL STUDENTS MUST RETURN THIS FORM TO THEIR HOMEROOM TEACHER.