

# *Advisory Statement on the Use of Cell Phones and their Impact on Student Mental Health*

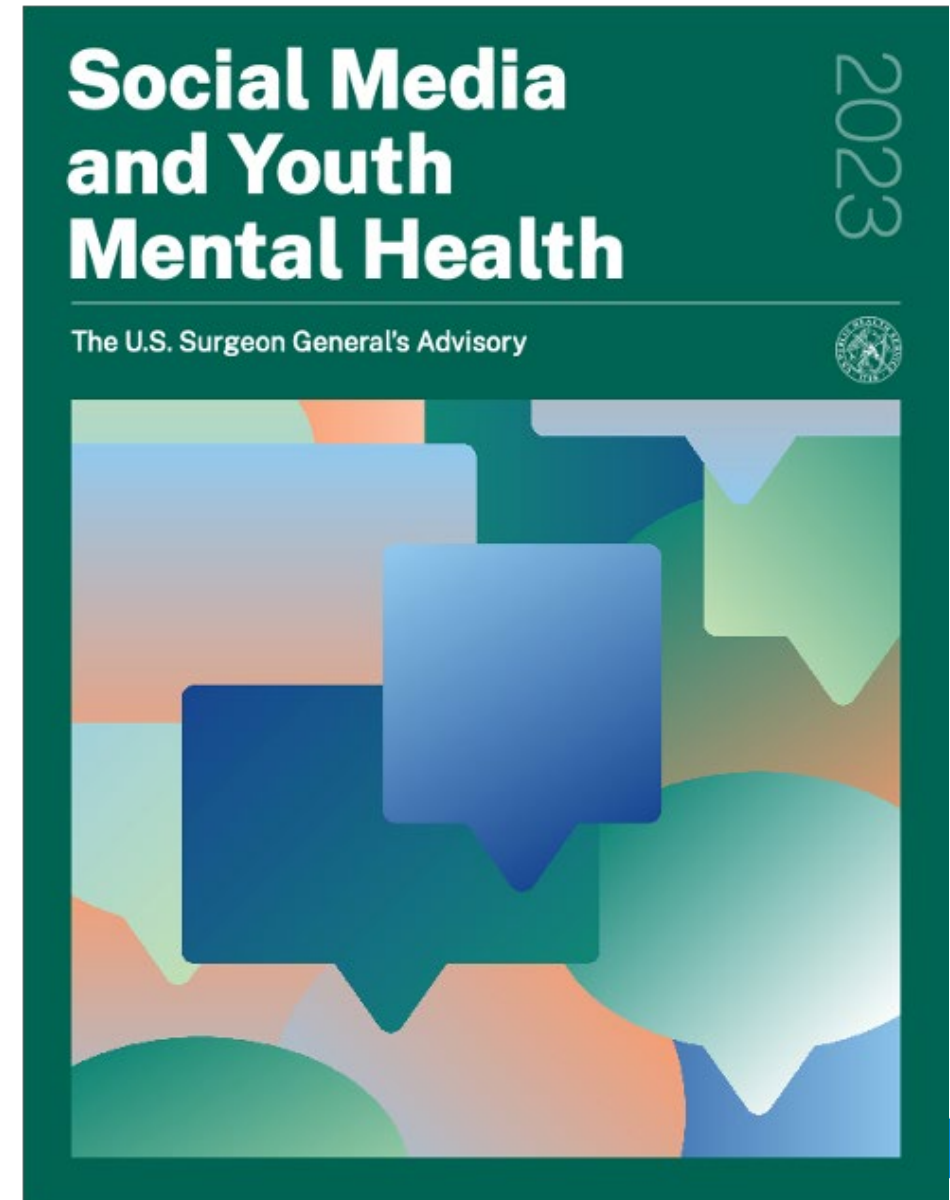


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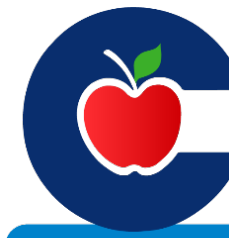
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# US Surgeon General's New Advisory<sup>1</sup>

- A Surgeon General's Advisory is a public statement that calls the American people's attention to an **urgent public health issue** and provides recommendations for how it should be addressed.
- Advisories are reserved for **significant public health challenges** that require the nation's **immediate awareness and action**.
- In May 2023, Surgeon General issued an advisory on the risks of social media on youth mental health including depression, anxiety, and lack of human connection.



# Amount of time matters -FACTS



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- “More than 3 hours per day on social media faced **double the risk** of experiencing poor mental health outcomes including symptoms of depression and anxiety.”<sup>2</sup>
- Teens who spend 3 hours or more a day on electronic devices are at a **35% higher risk of suicide** than those who spend less than 1 hour on them.<sup>3</sup>
- Teenagers who spend five hours or more a day on electronic devices are 71% more likely to have at least one suicide risk factor.<sup>3</sup>
- “Adolescent social media use is **predictive of a subsequent decrease in life satisfaction for certain developmental stages** including for girls 11–13 years old and boys 14–15 years old.”<sup>4</sup>
- Yet as of **2021, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades spend approx. 3.5hrs/day**<sup>5</sup>



# More Evidence

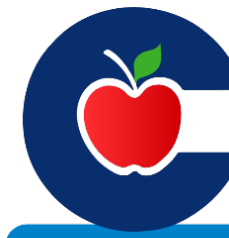
- Walking while using a cell phone *impacts executive function* and working memory and influences gait to such a degree that it *may compromise safety*<sup>6</sup>
- Cell phones can be an electronic medium for cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is *directly related to depression*.<sup>7</sup>
- In a randomized study, female participants reported *more negative mood after just 10 minutes* of browsing their Facebook account compared with those who browsed an appearance-neutral control website.<sup>8</sup>



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# Dose-response Meta Analysis (Liu et al.)



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- 26 studies, 55,340 participants
- Ages 11-19
- Linear association between time spent on social media (TSSM) and depression.
- Higher daily TSSM had 59.6% increased risk of depression
- For every hour spent:
  - 13% increase risk of depression for girls
  - 9% increase risk of depression for boys



# School Connectedness<sup>9</sup>

- Downtime spent off the device facilitates peer-to-peer, in-person interactions
- Free time spent engaging with peers, teachers and administrators increases school connectedness.
- Youth who feel connected to school were **48% to 66% less likely** to have mental health issues (i.e., suicidality, anxiety, or depression)
- School connectedness is **protective for mental health** (Bond et al., 2007), substance use (Weatherson et al., 2018), sexual and reproductive health (Markham et al., 2010), and violence and risk-taking behaviors (Chapman et al., 2011; Chung-Do et al., 2017)."



# GENERAL FRAMEWORK

- Per TEC 28.004 2(c-2), the Student Health Advisory Council is responsible for recommending policies, procedures, and strategies to prevent mental health concerns.
- Given the abundance of data linking student cell phone use with higher risks of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and suicide, the CISD SHAC recommends the following *strategies* to protect the mental health of our students by avoiding cell phone use during school hours while concurrently providing a safe, collaborative school culture that promotes independent thinking, creativity, face-to-face connections, student success, and professionalism:



# Cell Phone Access During Emergencies

- It should be noted that with the following SHAC recommendations on cell phone use during school hours, students will continue to have access to their cell phones during emergencies.
- Student security and access to phones during campus emergencies should remain unchanged.



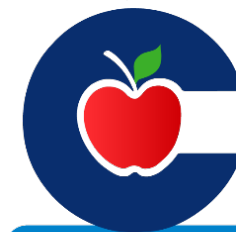
# 504 or Individualized Educational Plan

- Any student on a 504 or Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) plan, requiring the use of cell phones or other electronic devices, should maintain use consistent in the approved 504 or IEP.

# Time and Space

## K-8th

- For Kindergarten through eighth grade, cell phones may be used respectfully and responsibly before school and after school dismissal. Cell phones should not be used for recording, videoing, or photographing.
- During school hours, use of cell phones and electronic devices should be avoided and should be kept “away for the day.”
- Cell phones should be set on silent mode, kept in backpacks, and should not be visible during school hours including classroom time, lunch, hallways, and locker rooms.



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# Time and Space

## 9-12th

- For ninth through twelfth grades, cell phones may be used respectfully and responsibly before school and after school dismissal.
- Given the evidence that students learn best from an in-person instructor and the criticality of human connection, the use of cell phones should be avoided during the school day.
- Students may have access to their cell phones during designated periods (not lunch) on the order of ~20 total minutes a day. For example, students may have two, 10-minute cell phone periods each school day to manage more pressing personal matters.
- Outside of the designated periods, cell phones should be set on silent mode, kept in backpacks, and should not be visible during school hours including classroom time, lunch, hallways, and locker rooms.
- Cell phones should not be used for recording, videoing, or photographing.

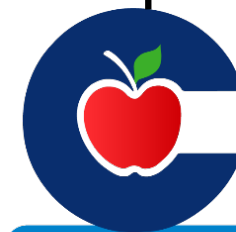


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# Extracurricular Communications

- To avoid sending mixed messages about the use of cell phones at school, all CISD communication with students regarding extracurriculars should occur outside of school hours and should include various methods of communication, such as school monitors, announcements, canvas etc., for inclusion purposes.
- For 9-12th, on the rare occasions where extracurricular communication must occur during school hours, students will be able to check for messages during designated cell phone periods throughout the school day.



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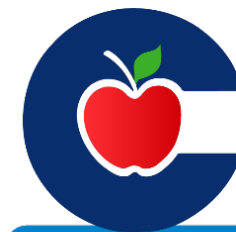
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# Campus Awareness

- Given the negative impacts on the mental health of students due to cell phone use, CISD campuses should be aware of mixed messages sent to students when requiring students to use their cell phones to access information. As such, cell phones should not be the primary mode for access to forms, extracurricular communication, QR codes, etc.
- Campuses should utilize Chromebooks, monitors, announcements etc. in lieu of cell phones, to communicate with students during the school day.

# Accountability

- Students should be supported with appropriate interventions, if necessary, based on mental health concerns.
- Students should be held accountable with appropriate interventions that deter their desire to be non-compliant with campus cell phone policies.
- Cell phones or other electronic accessories should not be used to incentivize behavior or to fill classroom time in the event “free time” occurs in the classroom.



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# The Way Forward

- We must all engage in a proactive, multifaceted approach (educators, administrators, etc.)
- Education of all key stakeholders
- Define district goals and how to measure success
- Develop strategies to reach success
- Be supportive, develop partnerships

# References



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