



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE BOROUGH OF BRENTWOOD

August 25, 2022

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Brentwood High School:

Greetings to all of you and welcome back to the 2022-2023 school year. The high school administration, faculty, and staff are excited to get started working with your student(s). We have been through several years of change and disruption due to the COVID era and we are excited to begin this school year with a sense of "normal."

For the first time in years, we have no new staff or any replacements to begin the school year. All of our teachers are returning, and we are happy to have consistency in place. At the end of last year, we welcomed our new assistant principal, Mr. Ted Ulmer and he has been an excellent addition to our administrative staff.

During the past two years, the school was forced to make adaptations and adjustments to manage life in the pandemic. Some of the changes have been very positive like the addition of Canvas and every student being issued a personal device. Other changes, or adjustments to policy, have not been as positive. It is our goal to address these issues and to return to previous policies that we had in place pre-pandemic

Please note, that the information that is contained in this letter is **ONLY** for students **Grades 9 through 12**. Brentwood Middle School has separate policies and procedures in place for their age range of students.

Cell Phones

The most notable change that we will be making at the high school is the student use of cell phones. Four years ago, prior to one-to-one technology being implemented, we permitted high school students to have their cell phones on their person during the school day. Unfortunately, this privilege has become the biggest distraction in our building. It has negatively impacted our academic performance and social standards.

Beginning this school year, our students will not be permitted to be in possession of their cell phones during instructional time, including study halls. In an effort to be reasonable, we are permitting students to have their cell phones during class change and in the cafeteria. However, ALL students will be required to place their cell phones in individual pockets located in the classrooms. The cell phones will be required to remain in the individualized pockets from the beginning of the period to the end of the period. This includes if a student is excused to use the restroom or go elsewhere in the building. Students also have the option to leave their cell phones in their lockers.

Our change of cell phone procedure in the high school is being done to provide students with a structure where focused learning can take place during instructional time and limit interruptions while our faculty is teaching. Any student who refuses to comply

with placing their cell phones in the classroom storage pockets, will be considered to be insubordinate and disciplined appropriately in accordance with the Brentwood High School Student Handbook.

If the situation with student cell phone use during school time continues to worsen, and/or students are not compliant with these new rules, the high school administration is prepared to ban cell phones during school time in all areas and at all times.

Over the past few years students with cell phones have done the following:

- Students have used their cell phones during instructional time and had to be reminded to put them away and return their attention to the lesson. Instruction has been significantly impacted by the distraction of students using their cell phones during class.
- Students have taken personal phone calls during class time and in the hallways. This has included video calls.
- Photos and videos have been taken of other students without their knowledge for purposes that were intended to mock, humiliate, or make fun of other students. This in direct violation of Brentwood Borough School District Policy.
- Teachers, administrators, and students have been recorded with video or audio without their knowledge or consent. This in direct violation of Brentwood Borough School District Policy.
- Students have accessed social media, participated in TikTok videos, created posts with pictures and videos without the consent of the school district or other students and teachers in the post. Students have also participated in behaviors that are deemed inappropriate for school while creating posts for social media purposes. This in direct violation of Brentwood Borough School District Policy.
- Students have arranged physical altercations to occur as a result of their cell phone use.

We appreciate your partnership in this effort to provide an educational environment that is conducive to learning, and not interrupted by the distraction or preoccupation with cell phones.

Other Electronic Devices

In addition to cell phones, the high school administration is placing a restriction on the use of air pods, earbuds, headphones, and or any other electronic device being worn by students during the school day. These items will not be permitted to be worn in the building or during class time during school hours. This includes during class exchange and in the cafeteria. Any electronic device that is placed in or on the ears is not conducive to a productive learning environment. This will also include any other electronic devices that are deemed to be a distraction or counterproductive to learning, which may include, but not limited to smart watches or smart devices.

Dress Code

As outlined in the Brentwood High School Student Handbook, there is an expectation for appropriate dress during the school day. The major issues that will be address in the dress code from day one are the following:

- Students are not permitted to wear hats, headwear, or hoods during the school day.
- Students are not permitted to wear tops that expose their midsection or torso from the armpit to their waist.
- Students are not permitted to wear coats intended for outdoor use during school time.
- Students are not permitted to carry backpacks during the school day.

Your cooperation in discussing appropriate attire with your child will be greatly appreciated.

Vandalism

It is unfortunate, but last year we observed a significant increase in vandalism at the high school, particularly in the restrooms. It began as a social media challenge, and continued through the school year. Vandalism on school property will not be tolerated. Any student found or observed engaging in such behavior will be charged legally and disciplined in accordance with state and local ordinances as well as discipline outlined in the student handbook.

It is our desire as an administration and faculty to start this school year off on a positive note. We experienced frustrations the past two school years with so many changes and adjustments due to the global pandemic. Our goal is to provide a safe and distraction-free learning environment for all of our students. We appreciate your support as we enter the new school year. Brentwood High School is best when we all work together for the greater good.

Sincerely,



Jason T. Olexa, Ed.D.
Principal



Ted Ulmer
Assistant Principal