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Adolescence is fundamentally a time for the development of cognitive and social skills necessary to navigate a complex, multi-layered adult world. As a Montessori program, we are committed to the healthy development of the whole person, and we recognize both the need for proficiency with technology and the importance of cultivating innate human potential. Social skills are developed primarily through personal interaction, face-to-face communication, and collaboration in group processes. At Hershey Montessori School, we are dedicated to nurturing **personal human interactions** for 12- to 18-year-olds and, therefore, limit efficient and appropriate use of communication technologies as resource tools. Students and families must *understand and agree with* our policy that limits individual screen time (computers and internet activities) to academic use, emailing, and limited, appropriate exploration of websites of personal interest. *We do not use telephones as internet access tools.*

Technological communication devices have the potential to be over stimulating, overly distracting, and even addictive. Adolescents who respond frequently and without self-regulation to texting and phone communications are at risk of sacrificing focused attention on learning opportunities and of losing sleep.

Hershey Montessori School provides sufficient access to the internet for academic research, emailing, and appropriate personal use in limited time frames and under general adult supervision. Unregulated, private access to the internet is especially risky for a young adolescent whose brain has not yet developed executive functioning capabilities (self-regulation and sound judgment). Internet use for this age group still requires adult guidance and general adult awareness.

Any modification of internet access deemed healthy, appropriate, and productive as students mature toward young adulthood (ages 16-18) will be considered carefully by both adults and students, researched and debated thoroughly, and changed only after evidence-based proposals have been considered and approved.

### **Cellular (Mobile) Phones**

- Boarding students may have, *but are not required to have*, cell phones. Only **BASIC** phones are permitted. Phones are to be used for calling and texting only. Examples of acceptable phones (from Verizon) include Samsung Convoy 3, LG Revere 2, Samsung Intensity 3, LG Cosmos 3 and Exalt.
- **NO SMART** phones are allowed. Note that even if the phone has the capability of having the internet disabled, it is not allowed because of the difficulty in assessing each individual phone.
- Cellular phones are not to be used as internet access tools.
- Cellular phones are to be used only during designated times (spelled out in the Community Handbook) and are to be checked in for storage at all other times.
- Text messages must be respectful of others and free of offensive language or commentary. They must not in any way suggest rumors about someone, communicate hurtful or sexual innuendo, or attempt to bully another person or group of people.

Ohio's law concerning bullying is found in the Ohio Revised Code, section 3313.666. The law prohibits harassment, intimidation, or bullying in schools. It went into effect on March 30, 2007. The law defines "harassment, intimidation, or bullying" to be any intentional written, verbal, or physical act that a student has exhibited toward another particular student more than once and the behavior:

- Causes mental or physical harm, and
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for the other student.

**Electronic Readers, Notebooks and Tablets**

- Simple electronic readers are permitted for reading only. The more advanced electronic reader models (that resemble tablets) are not permitted.
- Personally owned tablet computers, notebooks or laptop computers (unless needed for academic accommodations) are not permitted. All technology devices deemed appropriate by the school will be made available for use by the staff.

**MP3 and Music Players**

- Music devices that only play music are permitted. iPod touches, game devices and other devices with game-playing capabilities, video or internet capabilities are not permitted at school, as they tend to detract from real physical interaction and development.

Hershey Montessori School will continue to cultivate grace and courtesy in social situations, helping young adults become increasingly aware of the importance of respect for one another and the importance of focused attention at appropriate times.

**Communication in General**

Students at Hershey Montessori School have numerous options available to them for communicating with family and friends: prepaid phone cards using the school phone, basic cell phones, Skype, and e-mail.

In the event that a student has access to a school issued e-mail account, that account may only be used for school related purposes.

***If cellular phones, electronic readers, music devices or any electronics are misused, the staff reserves the right to confiscate them or to regulate student use with stricter parameters based on individual student situations.***

**By signing this agreement, students and their parents agree to support the above-stated policies and the reasoning behind them.**

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_