

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Susan Zych. I have worked as a Registered Nurse for 44 years, the last 24 as a school nurse. I would like to make a counterpoint to the argument that students need to have a cell phone in school in case they need to contact their parent(s).

In this situation a responsible student woke up with a headache but insisted he was well enough to go to school because he didn't want to miss his classes. By mid-morning the student felt worse and texted his mom to come pick him up. Mom responded that she was at work and would be able to pick him up at lunchtime. The student went to his next two classes and while he was at lunch his mom arrived to pick him up.

The next morning mom contacted the nurse to let her know her son was diagnosed with the flu.

From the time this student texted his mom he unknowingly exposed the eight students within the 6 foot radius of his desk in each of his two classes, the five students within the 6 foot radius of his cafeteria seat and any other student or staff member he spoke with face to face.

I cannot fault this student for exposing over 20 members of the school community to the flu. In his defense all he was trying to do was not miss any of his classes. The problem was the school policy that allowed this student to use his cell phone between classes and circumvent being seen in the nurse's office. If he did not have access to his cell phone he would have been assessed by the school nurse and isolated from other students and staff, thus minimizing the spread of the flu.

Did this student's mom need to be contacted? Yes, absolutely. Was there another option to contact his mom without jeopardizing the health and wellbeing of the school community? Yes, absolutely.

COVID, the flu and multiple other viruses are here to stay. We now have outbreaks of the measles in several states. During the COVID pandemic we learned we can control the spread of these infectious diseases in our schools. But we cannot control the spread of diseases we do not know about. Students being allowed to carry cell phones during school 'in case they need to contact their parents' inhibits our ability to control the spread of infectious diseases. I respectfully request you take this into consideration as you vote on the cell phone in school policy.

Susan Zych RN, BS, MS  
susanzych@gmail.com  
315 263 3760