

# Middle school adopts new phone policy

By Shannon Head

Durant middle schoolers now have a new policy that requires the students to put their phones in phone holders during their classes to help them stay focused during the school day.

The official policy states that the students either keep their cell phones in their lockers or put them in the classrooms' phone hangers.

The new policy is in response to last year where the phones seemed to be used for playing games or worrying about personal situations during instruction times, according to Mrs. Stephanie Frett, a middle school science teacher.

She said the "main objective of the policy is to get students to focus on the teacher and their school work."

"Some students do not like the new policy, but most have been very respectful of

it," said Mrs. Frett.

Paige Happ, an eighth grader, has adapted to the new policy so far.

She feels that it was put in place due to "some kids hiding their phones instead of listening," she said.

In every classroom, there is a phone hanger on each wall. The students are in charge of making sure they put their phones in the hangers before they sit down and begin class.

Luckily, some teachers allow a five-minute phone break during class time. Unfortunately, some students don't put their phones back even after their breaks.

In fact, further actions have been taken if students decide to refuse the policy.

The administration is called, then the students can decide to put their phone in the holder or have their phone in the office the rest of the day.

Due to the middle schoolers who choose to not focus in class, the rest of the students have to face the repercussions.

For eighth grader Colby Gast, he understands the policy and is able to manage not having his phone.

"I don't really like it that much, but I can deal with it," he said.

With how much technology has taken over nowadays, this policy seems like it would take a huge toll on these teenagers. For Happ, her readjustment time to this protocol hasn't been difficult.

"I don't even get my phone during free time sometimes," Happ said.

Kyle DeWulf, a senior, believes this policy could potentially help certain students focus better.

He also believes that the policy might help students open their eyes when it comes to technology overall.

For example, while students are out of class, there might be a higher chance they won't feel the need to be connected or attached to their device as much.

Ben Orr, another senior, thinks the policy should not be in high school, though. The high school and the middle school students have a different maturity level.

"We are more disciplined and have more self-control than the middle school students," he said.

Another factor that has seemed to take a toll on some kids, including Gast, is not being able to listen to music while they do their work.

Nowadays, it's found that some students are more focused when they are listening to music.

"I don't like it because when we're done with all our work and we have nothing to do, we can't use our phones," Gast said.

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She also said she is more comfortable in the girls-only class than in the co-ed weights classes.

"I feel like I can talk more freely than what it would be with boys," said Clark.

Senior Ella Mundt said she is happier being in the girls-only weights class.

"I'm just more comfortable in a class full of girls than opposed to other guys," said Mundt. "I don't feel judged by guys being there."

Freshman Emma Meincke, however, wishes to be in the co-ed weights classes, saying she feels she "would like to show the boys that I'm better than them."

Durant High School may be ahead of the curve when it comes to women-only fitness. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a renewed fad for women-only gyms, according to the website Shape.com.



Photos by Zachary Pearlman

Several members of the girls' weights class learn different lifting techniques.

# Freshman writer publishes first book on Amazon

By Karissa Hoon

Cadey Richman, a freshman at Durant High School, recently published her own book through Amazon.

Since COVID-19 shut down the majority of her summer activities in 2020, Richman decided to sign up for a virtual writing class. This class required her to write a story in the horror/gothic genre, which led her to write the now published novel, *Tomorrow Death Will Come to Stay*.



Photo by Karissa Hoon

Freshman Cadey Richman holds a copy of her published book.

"I would not have been inspired to write the story that I did without that," said Richman.

She said it took up most of her summer to write the story and be able to revise it.

With the help from her siblings and parents, she is able to get her work just right.

"They read what I have written and make suggestions on what to change and point out grammatical errors," said Richman.

This is her first and only novel written. She stated that she has many unpublished poems and is also in the process of writing another book.

The story, *Tomorrow Death Will Come to Stay*, has won the Golden Key Award in a writing contest through the Belin-Blank Center at The University of Iowa.

"The Golden Key Award is given to the top ten percent of writers participating. I won the award at the state contest. My work was also entered in Nationals; however, I did not win any awards there," Richman explained.

Being able to get your own book published sounds very difficult, but for Richman, she was able to figure it out "pretty easily."

The process started by signing up online through Amazon. Then she was able to choose her own book cover and was able to edit her original draft fonts and paragraphs to be able to fit the paperback.

"We ran into some editing errors, but they were solved quickly," said Richman.

When a book is purchased, she will receive 35 percent of the book's profit leaving the rest to pay Amazon for the cost of making the paperbacks.

Amazon also allows her story to be sold in both Kindle and ebook along with paperbacks. She plans to continue writing for a long time.

"My hope is to get my next book and my poetry published as well when they are finished," Richman said.

Though most of her work has been

in the gothic genre, she wants to try other writing styles.

Richman also takes part in the high school band playing the flute and has also been involved in choir for a few years.

In her free time, she really enjoys reading, listening to music and spending time with her pet rabbit.

# Durant senior starts up her own Etsy business

By Kiley Stineman

Durant senior Isabelle Mathis is her own boss at 17.

Mathis created her own Etsy shop as a side job in the winter of 2020. It started off with only selling paintings or foam mushrooms that she created, but it evolved over time into jewelry as well.

"I first decided I wanted to sell my stuff when everyone was telling me I should sell my paintings, and I did," said Mathis.

Now, she makes and sells bracelets, rings, necklaces, and earrings that she makes from crystals/gemstones.

"I basically self taught myself how to make them," said Mathis.

The jewelry that she makes takes about 20 minutes, but the art may take anywhere from one to five hours.

"It really all depends on what it is that I am painting," she said.

Etsy was founded in 2005 as an outlet for people to sell handmade items or craft supplies. According to the Etsy website, the items sold can range from small items like jewelry, to furniture or home de-

cor.

Mathis offers custom options for her clients where they can show her what they want whether it be for a painting or for jewelry.

"For my paintings, they can just show or tell me what they would like, and I will do it to the best of my ability," she said. "For my jewelry, I will show the customers previous pieces and show them all the different crystals/gemstones I have and let them pick them out."

The gemstones come from shops dedicated to selling crystals, and even from stores online.

Because the pieces are easy to make without using a lot of labor, her prices are very affordable: \$5 for rings, bracelets for \$10, and earrings for \$8.

Mathis has had six sales recently with three being paintings and the other three as wire crystal rings.

Her Etsy shop also has three admirers, who make sure they get updates when Mathis adds anything new to her shop.