

Hawk Happenings



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New phone policy frustrates students

Sara Fitzgerald - 12

Hamburg High School has made some changes for the current school year in hopes of bringing academics and participation rates up. Although the rule is unpopular with some students, Dr. Beissel believes that eventually, they will see the benefits as well.

The idea of this new policy began around the third quarter of last year after observing numerous phone-related disruptions in the school environment. Mrs. Fink, vice principal, began conversations with Dr. Gravish after she noticed that most of the problems students were having originated from social media and their cell phones. Overall the administration decided that the policy change restricting inappropriate phone use would help to put some boundaries into place.

Dr. Beissel says, "I believe it should be all about balance and boundaries." He believes that it would be unfair to ban the phones entirely and that it would not be enforceable with 700 hundred students. Dr. Beissel is doing his best to allow the cell phone rules to be fair to the students but also fair to the teachers who support the phone policy change due to increased engagement in their classes. The students need to be appropriate with their phones during school hours, and since they are personal devices it makes it challenging for school officials to supervise their use by students 24/7. Dr. Beissel is hoping that after this rule the grades will increase and that students will have more interaction with their classmates during class. Dr. Beissel is hoping that eventually, the students will meet a middle ground and the rules will not have to be as strict. However, as the rule was being developed the teachers mainly supported it because of the numerous phone-related disruptions they had witnessed in the school environment. If students can do their tasks and respect their teachers then the cell phone rule could become less strict.



HAHS hosts the first football game of the season

Bethany Stuffle - 10

On Friday August 25 at 7pm, Hamburg Area High School hosted the first football game of the season against Halifax. Just like every other home game, there was a fun theme. Students, teachers and parents could be seen decked out in their Hawaiian gear, for the Hawaiian theme. In addition to everyone dressing up, Student Council was also selling leis for one dollar each, for those needing or wanting to show some fun school spirit. One of this year's sophomores at HAHS, Tia Adam, bought another lei in addition to the one she already had. She thought the Hawks played well and is hopeful for many wins to come.

The game concluded with the Hamburg Hawks' first big win of the season, with a score of 49-19. John Sharp, a sophomore on the football team, said "It feels great to win our home opener." He also thinks that the team will "continue to improve and get better week by week."

In addition to the actual football part of the game, there is also the marching band part. Fun music can be heard while watching the game to get everyone excited. Riley Mohn, a sophomore, explains playing with the marching band at the game as, "very exciting and very loud in order to get people excited for the end of the game." Her favorite part is getting to talk to the other band. She enjoys playing many different games and they are always looking for new members and so is color guard. If anyone is interested in marching band, Riley will also be writing an article on some of her experiences.

Cheer is also a fun part of the game. The cheer team dances to a bunch of the songs that the band plays, so in a way the two activities are intertwined. The cheer team enjoys performing "Pirates of the Caribbean," "Shut up and Dance," and "Hey Baby." Maddie Handwerk, a sophomore and cheerleader at HAHS said that her personal favorite songs are "Land of a Thousand Dances," and "Tequila."



Ms. Ilgenfritz joins HAHS staff

Chloe Stitzel - 10

Ms. Ilgenfritz is the new social worker here at HAHS. Social workers' jobs are to help students and their family. If a student needed to have insurance, for example, then she could help them and set them up with resources that she has. She can help you find resources for outside services, provide student check ins and can do things with social security cards/needs and non academic needs.

Ms. Ilgenfritz graduated from Kutztown University in May of 2023 with a masters degree in social work. Her undergrad degree is the bachelors of social work. She knew she wanted to work with teenagers and knew she wanted to be able to provide assistance to them so she decided to do social work.

This is Ms. Ilgenfritz's first job in the field of social work, but she has done internships with Haven House and Brandywine Heights Elementary School. Ms. Ilgenfritz states, "The staff has been very welcoming and the students are great." She knew she wanted to work with high school students and this was a job where she knew she could work with high school students.

Ms. Ilgenfritz has two dogs: Otis and Nellie. She loves to be outdoors hiking or at the beach.

To talk to Ms. Ilgenfritz, visit the counseling d schedule a time to meet or talk to your counselor about your needs.



School enforces new no bag policy

Hailey Quinn - 11

At the start of the 2023-2024 academic school year, students and staff were informed that the school would be enforcing a new no bag policy. In previous years students were allowed to carry bags that were the size of the school issued chromebook cases. This allowed students to carry tote bags in order to aid them with transportation of school supplies to classes.

Students were confused by the change and wanted to know the reasoning behind it. Mrs. Alyssa Fink, the vice principal, states that, "The main reason we have this new policy is for safety. Schools will take different approaches to safety and this is our way of making sure things won't be coming into the building that shouldn't be."

Many students who benefited from the use of bags last year are reflecting on why they utilized such a resource. Shelby Dougherty, a junior who used a tote bag last year states, "Using a tote bag last year made it so much easier to carry all of my stuff." Another student, Sara Fitzgerald, a senior, states, "Using a tote bag made carrying books easier, and made for less trips to the locker, which helped with getting to class on time more often."

The new rule could potentially create a few problems. Isabella Reader hypothesizes, "More kids will be late to class, because they have to go to their locker at inconvenient times." There are many students who struggle to get to their lockers, gather all of their supplies for the next class, and make it to class in the allotted three minutes. The tote bags were convenient for carrying many supplies at one time, and allowed students to make it to class on time. This was especially helpful when there is no opportune time to go to one's locker throughout the day.

The overall consensus of students who used tote bags in previous years is that they wish the rule would be changed back to the way it used to be. Until then, speedy locker stops are the best plan.

Senior Kylah Reading reflects on high school field hockey career

Molly Krick - 10

Kylah Reading, mid-fielder #13, has begun her 10th year playing field hockey this fall. Kylah's favorite memories from playing in high school are the team singing the song Jar of Hearts by Christina Perri on the bus rides to away games. Another favorite memory is spilling BBQ sauce on her white pinnie during dinner at doubles week. After this dinner, one of our corner plays was named "BBQ" after the infamous incident.

Kylah enjoyed creating different friendships with her teammates over her successful high school career, coming in freshman year as a varsity starter and maintaining and holding that position throughout her career. One thing Kylah would tell her younger self is that being conditioned plays a major role in an athlete's performance on the field. Along with the career, teammates will build relationships that you would have never thought they would. Kylah is very motivated by being successful. This motivates her to keep going though the season and give it her all. One important thing she has learned from her high school hockey experience is that time management is crucial to balancing a busy schedule. Kylah says, "It plays a huge role in how successful you will be academically as well as on the field." This will apply and help Kylah as she will continue her athletic career focusing on playing softball at Drexel University.



Reminder: No school October 6 and 9

HAHS lowers yearbook price

Hannah Kristiniak - 11

This school year, the HAHS yearbook price is nearly half of what it was last year. This is due to a switch in the publishing/printing company used and this change happened so that the yearbook, or pinnacle, is more affordable and accessible to all the students at HAHS.

Mrs. McCarthy, the adviser of the publications class that makes the yearbook, has used the company Balfour to publish the school yearbook the past few years. This year, the School Publications Company or SPC will be used to print the pinnacle. SPC is a company based in New Jersey that prints newspapers, magazines and yearbooks. This company will be new this year, but Mrs. McCarthy has worked with them in the past as they used to print the school newspaper and the district literary magazine.

The other publishers that were used in the back for the yearbooks had a much larger price because a portion of that was used to pay the representative’s salary. The representative would occasionally come out to school and help with the pinnacle. The price between other companies and SPC is greatly different because there is not a representative that comes out to the school and they are a printing company rather than a publishing company. Since Mrs. McCarthy has been in charge of the pinnacle for 28 years and is very experienced, a representative is not necessary for the production of the yearbook at HAHS. However, a representative may be very useful for an adviser who has only been in charge of the yearbook for a few years. Even though SPC does not have a representative, Mrs. MCarthy can still reach out and get help with any questions she has. SPC was used for the 2015 and 2016 yearbooks and not only is the price much cheaper, it still has the same quality, glossy pages, and sharp colors as well as the students in the publications class can still use InDesign which is the program that has been used for the past few years. Mrs. McCarthy says, “I am very excited and confident to work with the School Publications Company again.” The only downside to using SPC is there is no online order because they do not accept credit card payments and they do not send out reminder emails to families.

Madison Redding, a junior at HAHS, shares some insight on this topic as a student. Last year, she did not purchase a yearbook and mentioned that price played a factor in that decision as well as her not being a collector of books and wants to wait until her senior year to purchase a yearbook. The price of the yearbook being nearly half this year than it was last has made purchasing a yearbook tempting for Madison as well as her being a part of designing the yearbook. Madison says, “I think the price change is good for the people who intended to buy a yearbook last year, but couldn’t because they couldn’t afford it. Hopefully this change allows them to purchase one this year!” Madison also thinks the majority of students would feel happy about this change!

Meet Raphi

Madison Redding - 11

Meet Raphi, a black lab who turned one year old on September 9. He is being raised and trained by Mrs. McCarthy in the library. He enjoys, “playing ball out in the yard” and “going on walks which is great for his training,” exclaimed Mrs. McCarthy. He is here to be in, “as many social settings as possible for the 12 to 15 months that he’s here,” said Mrs. McCarthy. In December when he returns. The Seeing Eye in New Jersey for another three to four months of training, he is not scared of things and the world. The Seeing Eye is a non profit organization to help the visually impaired and dogs like Raphi will be a service dog.

Raphi at Hamburg is a great experience because so many of the experiences are here for example pep rallies, football games, the halls, walking in crowds. It allows him to be in multiple social settings which will help him later on. Come see him when walking by in the halls in the morning, or even stopping by during flex and even getting your printer picked up in the library.

Hannah Kristiniak, junior at Hamburg explained that, “Raphi helps provide a positive atmosphere at school and he brightens students mood when they visit him.”

Hannah also said “If I am having a bad day, I can go and pet him to cheer me up. Not only is Raphi’s presence at school beneficial to the students, it’s also beneficial to him because he gets the training he needs for ‘The Seeing Eye.’ So come down to the library and meet him before we have to say goodbye in December.

Check out The Seeing Eye and all the amazing work they do: www.seeingeye.org/.

Students discuss lunch menu

Alaena Cox - 9

All over the US, students have discussions about school lunch. A few students have suggestions on how to improve the menu and would like to see their favorite foods show up more recently on the menu, such as shells and cheese, chicken nuggets, and the Thanksgiving stuffing.

While comparing some school’s menus to ours, the foods Hamburg students like are popping up recently. In September, for example, Schuylkill Valley repeatedly had chicken patties, macaroni and cheese with a breadstick, and hamburger on the menu. Another example is that Fleetwood has a bunch of chicken options throughout the month, such as chicken patty, chicken nuggets, popcorn chicken, chicken parm, and chicken tenders.

Many students would like to see our lunch menu change to more chicken, while others do not. Roughly half of the students like how the menu is and like the diversity. A student even said that having the same foods over and over would be boring. Hearing both sides of the change could be solved by taking off some of the students least favorite foods, and replacing them with foods they would prefer. Then there is not repetition but also a more enjoyable menu.



How teachers feel about new rules

Isabella Forte - 11

Many students and teachers express a love-hate relationship with the new rules and expectations. Teachers who are known as more laid back feel they have to alter their teaching style to accommodate the new regulations, while other teachers find it right up their alley.

Math teacher, Mrs. Geske, expresses one side of the spectrum. For the majority, she states that the phone rule is particularly useful for her classroom environment. Students that have her find themselves having to utilize the phone pouches. Mrs. Geske claims, “I don’t love when there are negative interactions between myself and my students. However, I find the rules valuable and important. Everywhere in society we see rules, whether they are social norms or legal rules and regulations. It is important that students are given structure at school and shown a sense of right and wrong, actions and consequences.” Part of becoming an adult is learning that people make mistakes, taking ownership for that mistake, and growing from it. It brings us together by creating structure in the classroom which allows students to build a routine and know the expectations. Without structure, the teacher could be perceived as unfair in how they handle different issues that come up in class. Mrs. Geske continues, “I love the new phone rule. In math class, it was a major distraction from the learning process. When a student is looking at their phone they’re not actively engaged in the learning process that’s taking place in class. I’ve already witnessed positive results in the class atmosphere this year. My students are more attentive and are participating more frequently in the class discussions.”

While on the other hand, biology and human sciences teacher, Mrs. Sinopoli, has some of the same views, but shares different perspectives. “I do not love having to enforce rules, but I know it creates boundaries for what students can and cannot do. Though it is annoying to be the “bad” guy, I know it will help create the structure we need to be successful.” When asked if she thinks enforcing rules brings students and teachers apart, she replied, “Perhaps, but teacher student relationships do not build overnight. I try to set rules and expectations early, and hold kids accountable early, so they know how my room will run day-to-day.” She expresses that once things are established and boundaries are set, she tries to have great relationships with students. Mrs. Sinopoli says that she is proud of the students she interacts with and has only had to give one warning on the new phone rule.

Many of the teachers have a positive outcome for their students and how they handle the cell phone situation. While students dislike this new policy, most teachers believe that it will majorly benefit the students socially and academically.

Students prepare for annual musical

Elaina Hess - 10

The Hamburg Area High School performs a school musical every year near fall. The productions are always performed in the HAHS auditorium. Getting involved is a great opportunity for many students to try something new and to build confidence on stage. Even middle school students are invited to participate and many have joined. This year the show is Bye Bye Birdie, a musical written in 1960 by Michael Stewart. Many students are excited to participate in this year’s production as they have in the past. There are other students who have never been one and are preparing for their first. Practice for this year’s show started September 5 and lasts varying days until the day of the first performance. Students join the musicals for various reasons and love to be involved.

A junior, Skylynn Binder, said she joined the musical because singing and music is her main passion. She is a cast member playing the role of Kim MacAfee. She expresses she likes dressing up as someone else and acting. Skylynn enjoys doing dance so the musical is a good fit for her interests. This is her second year in a school production.

A sophomore, Maisie Weeks, said she decided to be involved in the production because she has always liked and had a passion for singing and acting. She is a cast member playing the role of Margie and the understudy of Ursula. Maisie says when she came to the high school, she was inspired by the cast and others involved and thought they were very interesting. She decided to join this group because it had many people similar to her that liked the same things as her. This is her third year involved in the school musicals.



Overall, many students join school musicals because they are interested in music, singing, and/or dance. Being a part of the shows is a great way to get involved at school and participate in something you might find enjoyable.

Reminder: Homecoming dance will be held in the new gym on October 7

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