

# DepEd worry: Sex video in studes' cell phones

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Inquirer.net

**W**ORRIED the sex video craze sweeping the country may find its way into the cell phones of students, the Department of Education (DepEd) has banned the use of cell phones during classes.

*Uh, what about during recess?*

DepEd has resuscitated a six-year-old memorandum regulating the use of cell phones in public schools.

*Uh, what about after school?*

In an interview, education assistant secretary Teresita Inciong asked parents and teachers to guide their children and monitor

their use of cell phones.

"The proliferation of sex videos through cell phones is one of the reasons we recommended the banning of cell phones inside classrooms," Inciong said.

She referred to a November 2003 memorandum by former Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus, which "strictly imposes a ban on the use of cell phones by students during class hours."

**Curious adolescents**

Inciong is particularly worried for "adolescents" who are very curious about many things.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said they could not completely ban cell phones in public schools, but only during classes, because many parents want their children to bring cell phones so they could be reached during emergencies.

Lapus said his main objection to allowing cell phones inside classrooms was because "it is distracting to teachers and other students."

He said cell phones could also provide avenues for cheating during exams.

Inciong said: "We want our students to be able to focus on

their lessons."

**Caught texting**

She noted that many of the students brought to the guidance counselors had been caught by their teachers texting during class.

"They appeared to be reading their books, with their heads bowed. But when the teachers checked on them, they were actually texting," Inciong said.

With the memo's revival, teachers could confiscate cell phones of students caught using them during class, Inciong said, but they should be returned after class.

She said the department also recognized the benefit of students keeping their phones, especially those who suffer from asthma or other illnesses which require medication and immediate attention.

According to the 2003 memorandum: "Teachers and parents should devise ways to educate students on the responsible use of cell phones to prevent them from engaging in misguided and immoral activities."

It was issued six years ago in response to the proliferation of "lewd and obscene picture messages" sent through multimedia cell phone messages. ■

## Rare deer found in Central Philippines

**A** NEGROS Interior Biodiversity Expedition found a rare Visayan spotted deer. One of the world's rarest deer appears to be just holding out in a tiny patch of the Philippines forest that is rapidly being cut down by farmers and loggers, according to a British-Filipino scientific expedition.

The team said it "found fresh deer droppings, deer tracks and evidence of feeding activity" by the Visayan spotted deer during the group's three-week sortie into Mount Mandalagan in the north of Negros island last month.

"This is a critically important find to discover such an important animal alive and well

in its natural habitat," expedition leader James Sawyer said in a statement released after the British members' return to London.

Not much larger than a dog, the short-legged, rainforest-dwelling deer that feeds at night is the largest endemic species of the west Visayan islands.

It is notable for its distinctive pattern of buff-coloured spots scattered across its dark brown back and sides.

Cervus alfredi are found only in the central Philippines and before the herds dwindled through heavy hunting and rapid habitat loss, they were present on the islands of Cebu, Guimaras, Leyte, Masbate, Negros,

Panay and Samar.

Only a few hundred are now thought to remain on Panay and Negros due to intensive hunting and extensive deforestation as land is cleared for farming.

The northern Negros herds themselves had not been seen "for many years," according to the expedition statement.

The expedition also proved that "Philippine forests still harbour many rare and unique species, found nowhere else in the world," said the team's research leader Craig Turner.

The team said it would present its findings at Britain's Royal Geographical Society on September 3. ■

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- Robert D'Andrea

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