

Emma Carter
Cell Phone Safety

The question, "How many Boulder Country Day Middle School students will respond to a text from an unknown sender asking, 'Who is this?'" , grew out of the real life experience of several 6th grade girls who received that text repeatedly. The hypothesis was that the majority of Middle School students would reply to the text and that even a single reply to a text from an unknown sender would demonstrate unsafe cell phone use. Data was also collected regarding second reply texts, and the sharing of personal information. Eighty-nine middle school students at Boulder Country Day were invited to participate in our experiment. 46% of students' parents gave permission for their child (children) to participate and of those students 76% replied to the text. Over three-quarters of the students replying to the text proves our hypothesis correct, as that is well over a majority of the participants. It is interesting to note that 68% of students sent one text reply, while 32% sent two texts, and 39% of all participants offered personal information. Ironically, while every effort was made to maintain students' confidentiality from the experimenters, by having them blinded to the participants' names, it was the students themselves that revealed identifying personal information. Based on research, replying to any text from an unknown sender could be unsafe in ways that may not be evident to young cell phone users. Hopefully, this information will be helpful in further educating Boulder Country Day students about safe cell phone practices.