

STUDENT USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Introduction/Framework:

In May 2025, the Legislature and Governor enacted a new law, Education Law §2803. That law bans electronic devices in public schools, charter schools and BOCES. The law recognizes students may have personal electronic devices which are able to access the Internet and perform a wide range of functions. Education Law §2803 defines such devices as “internet-enabled devices.” The law states that such devices can create significant distractions to the school environment, negatively impact student mental health, contribute to disciplinary infractions, and reduce student engagement. Additionally, in an emergency, the use of personal electronic devices can distract students from following the directions of staff or emergency responders, contribute to the spread of misinformation, create congestion in the emergency response system, and interfere with the district’s emergency response protocols.

This policy establishes a District-wide prohibition on student use of any personal electronic devices including internet-enabled devices during the school day, in accordance with applicable law. This includes all summer programs.

The Board of Education adopts this policy in accordance with Education Law §2803. The Board of Education supports efforts to reduce, limit and otherwise remove the negative impacts of internet enabled devices as described in Education Law §2803 as well as other personal electronic devices.

Definitions

“Internet-Enabled Devices” shall mean any device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including but not limited to social media applications. Such devices shall include, but not be limited to smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, laptops, and other portable electronic communication or computing devices. Internet-enabled devices supplied by the School District that are used for an educational purpose are not included in this definition.

“Personal electronic device” is defined as including, but is not limited to: personal cell phones and SMART wearables (such as smartwatches and health wearables with a display); music playing devices; personal iPads, tablets, and other eReaders; personal Laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices; headphones, headsets, or in-ear headphones such as earbuds; and any other device capable of recording audio, photographic, or video content, or capable of viewing or playing back such content, or sending/receiving text, audio, or video messages.

“School Day” shall mean the entirety of every instructional day, including during instructional and non-instructional time beginning with student arrival, and including but not limited to homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study hall and passing time.

“School Grounds” shall mean in or on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the real property boundary line of the District.

Prohibited Use: Students are prohibited from using personal electronics and internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the school day, except as expressly permitted under the exceptions outlined in this policy.

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Use of internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 plan, or where required by law. Additionally, the district permits the use of internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency, and/or under the following circumstances:

1. Where necessary to manage a student’s healthcare (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.) a physician's note is required as per 504 plan or IEP;
2. For translation services; and/or
3. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor under the approval of a school administrator).

Students may also be permitted to use their internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds for specific educational purposes, if the following criteria are met:

- The student has pre-approval from the Building Principal in accordance with district procedures.
- With administrative approval, the teacher has authorized the use of specific devices for a particular activity/course, after which the device must be stowed per this policy.

Under any of these exceptions, devices may only be used for the purposes outlined in the exception, and the device must be silenced and put away when not in use, to the extent compatible with the reason for the exception.

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Communication and Contact: Parents or guardians may contact their child during the school day by calling the main office of the building where their child attends. The office will relay the message to the student. School office numbers can be found on the District's website.

Parents and Guardians can always email the school's administrators with general questions. If a parent needs to communicate anything of a sensitive or urgent nature, please call your building's main office.

Device Access and Storage

As required by Education Law §2803, this policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time) on school grounds (any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school or district or BOCES facility), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below).

1. At the elementary school level, students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. Any devices that are brought to school must be silenced and kept stowed away in backpacks, lockers, or district provided storage.
2. At the middle school and high school level, student devices must be silenced and stowed away in backpacks, lockers, or in district provided storage.

Administrators and staff may also restrict use of electronic devices during school activities held outside of the school day and/or off school grounds, events and activities

Discipline and Enforcement

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of all building staff in accordance with the District Code of Conduct. All staff members are expected to model appropriate digital behavior and support enforcement efforts. Students and parents will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

Students who fail to comply with this policy, will receive a reminder and warning for the first infraction. Those who repeatedly fail to comply will have their personal device(s) confiscated. The device will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. The first time this happens, the student may retrieve the device, and the parent will be notified. For subsequent instances, the Principal may require that the parent must retrieve the device.

The District will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the District. The District is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices brought onto school grounds. For students with exceptions under this policy, the district will examine alternative ways to achieve the purpose of the exception, including different storage or access provisions.

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Progressive discipline or restorative practices may be used in cases of repeated violations, consistent with the District's Code of Conduct. All disciplinary and enforcement actions shall be documented.

Electronic Devices and Testing

To ensure the integrity of testing, in accordance with state guidelines, students may not bring cell phones or other electronic devices into classrooms or other exam locations during all testing. Test proctors, monitors and school officials have the right to collect cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test and to hold them for the duration of the test taking time. Admission to the test will be prohibited to any student who has a cell phone or other electronic device in their possession and does not relinquish it.

Students with IEPs, Section 504 Plans, or documentation from medical practitioners specifically requiring use of electronic devices may do so as specified.

1. **Accessibility and Language Access:** This policy shall be clearly posted and accessible on the District's website. Upon request by a student, parent, or persons in parental relation to a student, a translation of this policy into any of the twelve most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in New York State, (based on the most recent data available from the United States Census Bureau), shall be provided.
2. **Review and Revision:** This policy shall be reviewed and revised as needed to (a) comply with applicable laws, regulations, and/or NYSED guidance; and (b) address any identified disparities in enforcement pursuant to the mitigation action plan.
3. **Regulations:** The Board authorizes the Superintendent and/or his designee to establish regulations necessary to implement this policy.

Cross-ref: 4526 Computer Use in Instruction

4526.1 Internet Safety

5300 Code of Conduct

Ref: Education Law §§2803 & NYSED *Prohibition of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in New York State Assessments*, www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments

Adopted: 07-29-25