

Frequently Asked Questions: Student Personal Communication Devices

What was the reasoning and supporting evidence for New Hampshire's new law banning cellphones in schools?

“Numerous studies show that higher levels of social media use among children and adolescents are linked to wide-ranging adverse effects: depression and anxiety; inadequate sleep (which can disrupt neurological development and lead to depression and suicidal behaviors); low self-esteem; poor body image; eating disorder behaviors; and online harassment.

In addition to heavy social media use, problematic use (e.g., addictive behavior) and harmful content exposure are key concerns. Problematic social media use, for example, is associated with attention deficit problems.”

The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2023, August 10). *Social Media and Teen Mental Health*. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/social-medias-concerning-effect-on-teen-mental-health>

Teenagers receive a median of 273 notifications per day on their smartphones, and 20% of those students receive over 500 notifications, with nearly a quarter of them arriving during school hours.

Radesky, J., Weeks, H. M., Schaller, A., Robb, M., Mann, S., & Lenhart, A. (2023). *Constant Companion: A Week in the Life of a Young Person's Smartphone Use*. Common Sense Media. <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/constant-companion-a-week-in-the-life-of-a-young-persons-smartphone-use>

On June 26, 2025, New Hampshire Governor Kelly Ayotte signed a new law mandating a statewide, "bell-to-bell" ban on personal electronic devices in public schools to improve student focus and reduce distractions. The law requires all public school districts and charter schools to adopt policies that prohibit the use of devices like cellphones and smartwatches during the school day, with specific exceptions for medical needs or learning accommodations.

Governor Kelly Ayotte. (2025, June 26). *Bell-to-Bell Ban on Cell Phones in Schools a Win for New Hampshire Students*.

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/news/bell-bell-ban-cell-phones-schools-win-new-hampshire-students>

When are communication devices prohibited during the school day?

Communication devices are strictly prohibited from bell-to-bell. This means from **7:45 AM to 2:30 PM** at LWSD schools.

What is considered a communication device?

A **personal communication device** is any non-school device that can connect to the internet or cellular networks and support calls, video, texts, emails, or instant messages. This includes, but isn't limited to, **cell phones, tablets, laptops, smartwatches and earbuds.**

Are there any exceptions to this policy?

Yes, exceptions can be made for **educational or medical purposes**, or to provide **appropriate language access** for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support, or 504 plans. For an exception to be granted, a team meeting must take place, and the specific need must be **directly written into the student's plan**, with documented educational or medical justification.

How can I reach my child during an urgent situation or emergency?

In an urgent situation or emergency, please **call the school office** for your child's grade level (elementary or middle/high school). We'll deliver messages to your child, and if you need to speak with them directly, they can call you back using an office phone.

How can I reach my child after school for school-sponsored events?

Families will have access to **Team Reach or Final Form** for direct communication with coaches or supervisors for after-school events. Coaches or supervisors may allow students to use their communication devices as long as it **doesn't interfere with the event.**

What happens if a student violates this policy?

Here's a breakdown of the consequences:

- **First Offense:** The student will receive a **warning**, and the device will be **confiscated** for the remainder of the day. It will be held in the main office for pickup. Parents will be notified.
- **Second Offense:** The device will be **confiscated**. The student's parent or guardian **must pick up the device** from the principal's or superintendent's office.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** The personal communication device will be **confiscated**. The student's parent/guardian will be notified and **must pick up the device** from the principal or superintendent's office. The **Code of Conduct will be implemented** up to and including the student **not being allowed to bring personal communication device to school**.

Where should students keep their devices?

Students should keep their devices **OFF** and stored in their **backpack, handbag, or locker**.

What if my student's device is stolen or lost?

The school **district is not responsible for any loss, damage, or theft** of personal electronic communication devices brought to school. The school district **recommends that these devices are not brought to school**.