

# RED CREEK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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MATTHEW S. VANORMAN  
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Red Creek Central School Parents, Guardians and Red Creek Students,

I hope this communication finds you well and enjoying a peaceful, relaxing summer vacation with family, friends and loved ones. As we prepare for the 2025-2026 academic year, I wanted to inform you about an important statewide initiative that will directly affect our daily school operations and student experience.

As you may be aware, Governor Kathy Hochul recently announced the implementation of a statewide Bell-to-Bell Device Ban Policy for all UPK-12 public schools, charter schools, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), including students attending our Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES programs.

The purpose of this initiative is to create a more focused learning environment for students by minimizing distractions in schools. Research and feedback from educators, parents, and students across the state have shown that reducing screen time during school hours leads to several important benefits that include:

- Improved mental health
- Stronger peer relationships
- A decrease in bullying and social media distractions
- Better academic outcomes (e.g.: improved student focus, engagement, and learning)

## **What This Means for Our Students**

Beginning with the start of the 2025-26 academic school year, students will not be allowed to use personal internet enabled devices such as smartphones, tablets/iPads, earbuds, and smartwatches, from the first bell to the last bell of the school day. This includes classroom instruction, lunch, study halls, and transitions between classes.

## **Implementation at Red Creek Central School District**

To align with, and adhere to the state mandate, Red Creek will implement the following measures:

- Secure Storage - Each school will provide a secure method for students to store their devices during the day.
- Emergency Communication - We will ensure that parents can reach their children through the main office in case of emergencies. Likewise, students will have access to school phones if they need to contact home.
- Equity and Inclusion - Exceptions will be made for students who require devices for medical reasons, IEP accommodations, translation needs, or other approved educational purposes.

## Parent/Guardian Partnership

Your partnership is essential in helping to reinforce the importance of this new policy. We understand that this change may require an adjustment period. However, we are confident that this policy will foster a more focused, connected, and supportive school environment.

Please know your support and assistance with the following would be appreciated:

- Taking time to discuss the policy and the reasons behind these guidelines with your child prior to the start of the school year.
- Educating your child about the benefits of distraction free learning environments.
- Supporting the school in their efforts to provide a distraction free environment that focuses on learning and opportunity.

Families and students will receive letters from building administrators outlining specific protocols and procedures prior to the start of school. Additionally, building administrators will go over the policy and procedures with all students during the opening days of school. Prior to that, the district will be uploading the following documents to our website for your review and assistance in better understanding the cell phone mandate:

- More Learning, Less Scrolling - Creating Distraction Free Schools guide based on Governor Hochul's Statewide Listening Tour on Smartphone Use in Schools
- The Red Creek District's Board of Education Policy on the Use of Internet- Enabled Devices During the School Day
- Fact Sheet - provided NYSUT, regarding Internet-Enabled Device Restrictions in NYS Schools
- New York State Bell-To-Bell Device Ban Policy at Red Creek Central School District

This is a new process and procedure for all of us. We will continue to monitor, assess and adjust as needed to ensure in accordance with all the rules and guidelines established by the state mandate.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to your child's education as we work together to create a safe, focused, and distraction free learning environment for all.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's administrator should you have any questions or desire additional information regarding the cell phone mandate.

Respectfully,



Matthew S. VanOrman  
Superintendent of Schools  
Red Creek Central School District