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SOUTH COUNTRY
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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2025/2026 PARENT/STUDENT AFFIRMATION

CODE OF CONDUCT

The school district needs the support of all parents/guardians to help ensure that their child/children fully understand the **Code of Conduct** and the consequences for poor or inappropriate behavior. We ask that you sit down with your child/children and review the **Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct Brochure, Code of Conduct Appendix 1 and Code of Conduct Appendix 2** in detail.

PUBLICATIONS: RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION/ PUBLICATIONS IN PRINT/ON WEBSITE

As you know, the South Country Central School District proudly publishes information about the many accomplishments of its students. Unless objected to in writing by September 16, 2025, the District herewith gives notice of intent to provide, release or publish information on the District's website and in publications such as local, school or student newspapers, magazines, yearbooks, daily or weekly newspapers, athletic programs, musical or theatrical programs or to the military (11th & 12 grade students), any or all "directory" information as may be appropriate under the circumstances. Directory information includes student names, names of parents, address, age, height, weight, grade, major field of study, photographs, student participation in recognized school activities, extracurricular activities and sports programs, academic honors, achievements, awards, scholarships and similar information. **Parents who do not desire release of any of the directory information during the 2025-2026 school year must make specific requests in writing. Failure to make such a request shall be deemed consent.**

CELL PHONES

The South Country Central School District would like to inform you of an important update to **Policy 5695 – Students and Personal Electronic Devices**. This policy was **revised and adopted by the Board of Education on July 1, 2025**, pursuant to New York State Education Law. (see attached policy.)

This revised policy reflects our commitment to fostering a safe, focused, and supportive learning environment for all students. With the rise in digital distractions and concerns regarding student well-being, the updated policy outlines clear guidelines regarding the use of cell phones and other internet-enabled personal devices during the school day.

Key Highlights of the Updated Policy:

- No student use of internet-enabled devices (e.g., cell phones, smartwatches, tablets) is permitted during the school day on school grounds including in class, during lunch, recess, and hallway transitions, unless a documented exception applies.
- Elementary school students (K-5) are not permitted to bring devices to school.
- Middle and High School students are strongly encouraged to leave all internet-enabled devices at home. If a student in grades 6-12 needs to bring internet-enabled devices to school, those devices must be stored in the student's school-issued locker for the duration of the school day.
- Exceptions, with administrative approval and appropriate documentation, may be granted for students with medical needs, students with family care responsibilities, and students in grades four and five who walk home unsupervised.
- In case of emergency, communication between parents and students must go through the school's main office.
- Devices used without approval will be held in the main office until the end of the day, with escalating consequences for repeated violations.

The district asks that all parents/guardians affirm that they have reviewed this document and policies noted within with their child/children by indicating so on Parent Portal.

**Please complete the affirmations noted on Parent Portal
by August 29, 2025**



Book	Policy Manual
Section	Section 5000 - Non-Instructional / Business Operations
Title	Students and Personal Electronic Devices
Code	5695
Status	Active
Adopted	July 1, 2025
Last Revised	June 17, 2025

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices that can perform different functions. Such devices include "internet-enabled devices" defined as: any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications, but do not include any such device supplied by the district for educational purposes. Other personal electronic devices include devices which are not capable of connecting to the internet and access content on the internet, fitness trackers, wired or wireless headphones and earbuds, and e-readers, voice recorders, cameras and music devices. These devices can create significant distraction 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.

The district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents (which, for purposes of this policy, includes persons in parental relation) may contact their children via the following methods: calling the Main Office phone numbers published for parent/guardian use annually in the school district calendar. Parent/guardian messages can be delivered to students, and students are permitted to use a main office phone for the purpose of contacting a parent or guardian. The district will notify parents in writing of the communication protocol at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

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. Students in grades K-5 are not permitted to have internet-enabled devices in school.
2. Students in grades 6-12 are strongly encouraged to leave all internet-enabled devices at home. Should students in grades 6-12 feel the need to bring internet-enabled devices to school, they must be stored in their school-issued locker for the duration of the school day.

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

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Use of internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program, 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 under the following circumstances:

1. Where necessary to manage a student's healthcare (eg., glucose monitoring for diabetics).
2. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor).
3. For students in Grades 4 and 5 who do not qualify for district provided transportation.
4. In the event of an emergency as determined by the school or district.

Parents may request an exception for their children to use internet-enabled devices during the school day as listed above. Requests must be made to the Building Principal, and for healthcare exceptions, must include documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional.

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.

Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of building administrative staff. However, all designated employees are expected to assist in enforcement. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

For students out of compliance with this policy, 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 parent may be asked to retrieve the device. Further instances may result in the student being considered insubordinate and will be subject to the district's code of conduct. The district will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the district, but cannot guarantee the devices will be secure. 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.

Administrators will also discuss the aims of this policy with students and their parents, the benefits of a distraction-free environment, the reasons the student had difficulty following this policy, and how the district can help the student contribute to a distraction-free environment.

The district may not impose suspension from school if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device as prohibited by this policy. However, the district may utilize consequences under the district's Code of Conduct, including detention, in-school suspension, and exclusion from extracurricular activities. The district may also utilize assignments on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health, smartphones in school, or other relevant topics.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the school district Code of Conduct or other district policies, and in some instances, the law. The district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

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

Legal

Education Law §2803

Price v. New York City Board of Education, 51 A.D.3d 277, lv. to appeal denied, 11 N.Y.3d 702 (2008) (District may ban possession of cell phones on school property)

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

Cross References

Code of Conduct