



**SOMERS
HIGH SCHOOL**

Forward in Excellence

Pete Rodrigues, *Principal*
Brian Carroll, *Assistant Principal*
Jessica Anderson, *Assistant Principal*

Distraction Free Schools Policy and Practices

Somers Central School District and Somers High School are preparing for the 2025–2026 school year with a new cell phone policy aimed at creating a more focused and distraction-free learning environment. The updated policy, which aligns with New York State Education Law Section 2803, restricts the use of internet-enabled personal electronic devices during the school day across all grade levels. At their Board of Education meeting on July 17, 2025, the SCSD Board of Education adopted [Policy 5695 Students and Personal Electronic Devices](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you doing this?

This is now New York State law. AND...We want healthy students who are 100% engaged in learning. To address this, we are utilizing [Generation Faraday™ lockable, signal-blocking pouches](#) to create a learning environment where focus, safety, and interpersonal engagement are prioritized.

Schools that have implemented a phone-free policy have reported:

- Improved academic performance – Increased focus, comprehension, and participation in class.
- Healthier peer interactions – More meaningful face-to-face conversations, reduced social conflicts, and fewer disciplinary issues.
- Reduced stress and anxiety – Fewer distractions from social media and online drama.
- A safer school environment – Decreased cyberbullying and reduced incidents related to phone misuse.



What are the rules regarding cell phones?

During the school day, from 7:35 to 2:10, cell phones must be stored in the school-issued, lockable, signal-blocking pouch, inside a student's backpack or locker. This includes passing time, lunch, and classes that meet outside of the building.

Do I need to keep the pouch locked?

No, students who have their phones stored in the pouch and in their locker or backpack will not be required to lock the pouch. Students who are found to have their phones out without permission will be instructed to lock their phones in the pouch for the remainder of the school day.

How can I unlock my cell phone pouch?

If a student has locked their device or been required to lock their device in their pouch, there will be unlocking stations at the main entrance and at other exit points throughout the school. Additionally, classrooms will have unlocking keys.

What happens in an emergency?

Law enforcement tells us that being present and listening to instructions instead of being on cell phones is essential. If students need to access their phones, students can remove their phones from their pouch, and classrooms will have unlocking keys for any devices in locked pouches.



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How will I receive information in a safety or weather event?

Families should rely on information directly from the school or district office. Currently, SCSD protocols include the frequent use of phone, email, text and ParentSquare notification for sharing information and updates with families.

Can students use cell phones before and after school or on school buses?

Yes. Students can use their phones before and after school, as well as on district buses.

Can seniors with off-campus privileges use cell phones when they leave campus?

Yes, students may use their cell phones when they leave campus.

Can I use my own laptop/tablet?

High school students will be permitted to "bring your own device" (BYOD) once they have reviewed and agreed to the district's Acceptable Use Policy or use the school-issued tablet. Just as in prior years, both BYOD and school-issued tablets may be used for instructional purposes at the discretion of the teacher.

Are there exceptions to this rule?

Yes, for the following reasons.

- For specific educational purposes, when authorized by staff
- For health-related needs
- In emergency situations
- For translation assistance
- If they are primary caregivers (with administrator approval)
- If required by an IEP or 504 Plan

How can students get messages to families?

Students can send messages via school email or the phone in the main office.

How can families get messages to students?

In the event of an emergency or a time-sensitive issue, families can call the school, 914-248-8585, or email their students.

Will teachers and staff be using cell phones during the school day?

Teachers and staff members will model "phones away" so they can focus on teaching and learning by being fully present.

What happens if a student violates the policy?

For initial offenses, students will be asked to lock their phone in their pouch. Subsequent offenses will result in students having to leave their phone with an administrator for the school day and may require parents to come pick up the cell phone at the end of the school day.

What happens if a student uses a phone inappropriately (cyberbullying, harassment, etc.)?

This hasn't changed from previous years and depends on the student behavior. All behavior will be addressed in accordance with our Student Code of Conduct.

What happens if I damage or lose my cell phone pouch?

Students will be responsible for the pouch throughout their time at SHS. It will be assigned to them like a textbook or school-issued tablet. If the pouch is damaged intentionally or lost, families will have to pay a fee of \$30 for a replacement pouch.

