

Ellicottville Central Elementary & Middle/High School

Cell Phone and Internet-Enabled Device (IED) Use Policy

Effective for the 2025–2026 School Year

In Accordance with NYS Education Law § 2801 and § 2803

I. Purpose and Legal Authority

In accordance with New York State Education Law § 2801, all public schools are required to adopt a Code of Conduct to maintain order and ensure a safe, respectful, and disruption-free learning environment. Further, Education Law § 2803 empowers school districts to develop and enforce policies as part of their District-wide School Safety Plans, including measures that promote positive student behavior and address the use of personal electronic devices on school property.

This policy serves to:

- Promote a focused and safe academic environment
- Reduce distractions from instruction
- Comply with legal mandates to uphold student safety and school discipline

II. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all ECS students in Grades PK–12 during instructional hours and on school property throughout the regular school day. The policy governs the use of:

- Cell phones
- Ear buds or headphones
- Internet-enabled devices (IEDs) such as smartwatches
- Personal laptops, tablets, and iPads not issued by ECS

All policies are consistent with ECS's Code of Conduct and School Safety Plan as required by NYS Education Law §§ 2801 and 2803.

III. Elementary School (Grades PK–5)

- Devices brought to school must be powered off and stored in a bookbag, cubby, or locker during the instructional day.
- ECS reserves the right to confiscate unsecured devices.
- Repeated misuse may result in loss of the privilege to bring devices to school.

IV. Middle and High School (Grades 6–12)

- Students will be issued a locking phone case (replacement cost approx. \$20), and will be financially responsible for lost/damaged cell phone cases.
- Devices must be powered down and placed in the locking case during the instructional hours of the school day (8:19 AM – 2:55 PM).
- Ear buds must be stored in lockers and not worn or carried during the day.
- Devices remain in the student's possession (in the locked case) and may only be accessed with staff permission for approved reasons.
- Students may bring only one IED to school due to limited space in the locking case.

V. Permitted Use and Exceptions

Device access is allowed only for the following:

1. Medical/emergency needs, including diabetes care or other health management
2. Schedule or transportation changes
3. Communication with parents regarding forgotten items, fees, etc.
4. Translation or accessibility support, including IEP or 504 accommodations
5. Approved administrative exceptions, including legal caregiving obligations

Usage must be brief and in-class. Devices may not be taken to lockers, restrooms, or the hallway once unlocked. Faculty may deny access for unapproved purposes and refer students for support when appropriate.

VI. End-of-Day Unlocking Procedures

- Devices may be unlocked at the end of the day (2:55 PM or earlier for dismissal)
- Unlocking stations will be located in classrooms and offices
- Students are responsible for managing cases and ensuring they are on campus and ready for use the following day.

Students without a case must turn in their device to the main office for secure storage.

VII. Violations and Disciplinary Consequences

In alignment with ECS's Code of Conduct and Education Law § 2801, students found with unsecured or misused devices will:

- Have their devices immediately confiscated
- Be assigned building-level disciplinary consequences (including detention)
- Receive no warnings, as enforcement is immediate

Continued noncompliance may result in progressive disciplinary action.

VIII. Parent-Student Communication

- ECS students and parents will be trained on the use of an online communication platform (e.g., school district email) which will be accessible via school-issued laptops.
- For more involved issues, students may use phones in the counseling or main office.
- A landline telephone in the main office is available to all students when needed.

IX. Legal References

This policy is enacted in accordance with the following laws and regulations:

- NYS Education Law § 2801: Code of Conduct requirements
- NYS Education Law § 2803: School Safety Plans and enforcement authority
- FERPA: Student privacy rights related to device content
- IDEA & Section 504: Required accommodations for students with special needs

XII. Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed annually by ECS administration and updated as necessary to reflect current educational best practices, legal requirements, and student needs.

Adopted by: Ellicottville Central School Administration

Effective Date: September 2025

Authorized Under: NYS Education Law § 2801 and § 2803