

Policy 5695

(X) Required

(x) Local

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STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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, e-readers, calculators, 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.

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

Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation

To minimize distractions during the instructional day, parents (which, for purposes of this policy, includes persons in parental relation) may contact their children through the following approved methods:

Methods for Parents to Contact Students:

- Calling the school office
- Emailing the scholar using an email address added to our system to the scholars district-provided email address

Methods for Scholars to Contact Parents:

- Speaking with school office staff (with permission)
- Emailing their parent/guardian using their district-provided email address to an email address added to our system

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 facility), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below).

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- 1.** At the elementary school level, students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. Any device that is brought to school must be off and kept in the building or the designated classroom space, or if provided by the district, individual storage pouch.
- 2.** At the middle school level, student devices must be off and stored in their individual pouch.
- 3.** At the high school level, student devices must be off and stored in their individual pouch.

Students are discouraged from bringing other personal electronic devices to school. If students do bring such devices to school, they must be stored for the entire school day in backpacks; lockers, and they must be off and not used during the school day unless permission is granted by the school. However, students may wear fitness trackers as long as they do not interfere with instruction.

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 (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.);

2. For translation services; and/or
3. 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 an administrator in consultation with the school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor).

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.

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 must retrieve the device. Further instances will result in the device being held in the school office daily for longer periods of time. 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.

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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 state assessments. Teachers may grant specific permission for electronic device usage during tests other than state assessments.

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

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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.

Policy Distribution and Translation

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on its website. Upon request by a student or parent, the district will translate this policy into any of the twelve most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state, as identified by the most recent American community survey published by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The district will also include this information, or a plain language summary, in student/family handbooks.

Cross-ref: Computer Use in Instruction

Internet Safety

Code of Conduct

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Ref: 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

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