Children's Aid College Prep Charter School

Distraction-Free School Policy
Board-approved on August 13, 2025

In alignment with New York State Education Law (May 2025) and our unwavering commitment to fostering a safe, distraction-free learning environment, Children's Aid College Prep Charter School (CACPCS) has adopted a new Distraction-Free School Policy for all scholars in Grades K-8.

To ensure that scholars are fully present and engaged in their educational experience, cell phones, smartwatches, AirPods/headphones, music or audio devices, video game systems, and similar electronics are not permitted in a scholar's possession at any time during the school day.

This policy was developed in accordance with New York State Education Law §2803 and in consultation with CACPCS stakeholders.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Internet-enabled device(s): smartphone, tablet, smartwatch or other devices capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications, including, without limitation, computing devices such as laptops, iPad and tablets; portable music and entertainment devices such as iPod and gaming consoles.

Non-internet enabled device(s): cellular phone or other communication device not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the student to access the internet.

Parent: a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) or person(s) in any parental or custodial relationship to the student, or any individual designated by the parent to act in loco parentis

School Day: The entirety of the instructional day (including all non-instructional time during the school day such as homeroom period, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time).

School Grounds: All building structures, athletic playing fields, playgrounds or land contained within the real property boundary line of the school.

Students shall not use internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds unless such use is subject to an exception set forth in this policy. This policy does not preclude the use of (i) non-internet-enabled devices; or (ii) internet-enabled devices supplied by the school for educational services that are used for an educational purpose.

Exceptions
1. If authorized by a teacher, principal or school for a specific educational purpose;
2. Where necessary for the management of a student's healthcare;
3. In the event of an emergency;

4. For translation services;
5. On a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social work or school counsel, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member;
6. Where required by law.

Students must be permitted to use an internet-enabled device where the use is documented on an: a) Individualized Education Program (IEP); or b) Section 504 Plan.

A parent may make a request under one of the above exceptions to the Principal. Any healthcare related exception must also include documentation from a healthcare professional affirming such need.

AirPods, headphones, or other audio devices are not permitted during the school day unless explicitly authorized by a staff member for instructional purposes. No scholars (including scholars authorized to use these devices) may walk through the building wearing headphones or with them around their necks. Unauthorized devices will be confiscated and held until a parent or caregiver comes to the school to retrieve the device to ensure parental awareness of the school's policy against the use of these devices during the school day.

On-Site Storage of Internet-Enabled Devices Including Cell Phones

At the start of each day:

*For **Elementary School** Grades K-5 (1232 Southern Blvd.)*	*For **Middle School** Grades 6-8 (1919 Prospect Ave.)*
• ES scholars will be prompted to power off their devices before they arrive and as they enter the school building at their respective entrances. • Homeroom teachers will collect cell phones, smartwatches and other internet-enabled devices and secure them in labeled locked boxes. • Devices will be returned only at dismissal.	• Scholars must power off their devices as soon as they enter through Exit 5. This signals the start of the distraction-free school day. • Homeroom teachers will collect cell phones and smartwatches and secure them in labeled locked boxes. • Devices will be returned only at dismissal.

Late Arrivals:

*For **Elementary School** Grades K-5 (1232 Southern Blvd.)*	*For **Middle School** Grades 6-8 (1919 Prospect Ave.)*
If a scholar arrives late to school, they will be required to turn in their phone to their Homeroom teachers upon arrival.	If a scholar arrives late to school, they will be required to turn in their phone at the main office, where it will be secured in a designated locked box there in the main office. The Dean of Students and/or Assistant Dean of Students will distribute any late scholars' phones to the scholar's homeroom teacher for secure storage with the rest of the class.

Methods for Parents to Contact Students During the School Day

Parents who need to reach their scholar during the school day should contact the main office directly at **347-871-9002**. Scholars may not use personal devices for communication during school hours. Parents should save the school's number and respond when receiving calls from the school in case of emergencies.

Student Discipline for Accessing Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day

CACPCS is prohibited from suspending a student solely for accessing internet-enabled devices in violation of this policy. If a scholar is found in possession of a phone or electronic device during the day including during transitions, class, lunch, or while in the restroom, the device will be confiscated by a staff member and turned over to the Dean of Students and Culture. Confiscated devices will be returned based on the following steps:

- **First Confiscation**: The device is returned to the scholar at the end of the day. A parent or guardian is contacted and required to come to the school to retrieve the device and confirm knowledge of the school's policy against the use of these devices during the school day.

- **Second Confiscation**: The parent or guardian is notified and must come to the school to retrieve the device a second time and have a conference with the school's Dean and the scholar will serve lunch or after school detention. If the parent or guardian is unable to come to the school to retrieve said device, the school will hold the device until the parent or guardian can make arrangements to pick up the device.

- **Third Confiscation**: The parent or guardian is again required to pick up the device and the student will be required to serve another lunch or after school detention. The student's

name will be included on a repeated violations list to be shared with the Head of School and Trustees. The parent/caregiver will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal and/or Head of School to confirm parent understanding of the policy and procedures and the student will be required to turn in their device daily to the Dean of Students and Culture upon arrival and retrieve it only at dismissal.

Repeated violations may result in additional interventions, including a parent meeting, restorative assignments, or loss of privileges. Some uses of internet-enabled devices will constitute a separate violation of the Code of Conduct, other School policies, or in some the most serious cases, the law. CACPCS will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

Security of Devices

CACPCS will exercise reasonable care when holding student devices, but is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronics. All personal electronics are brought to school at the family's own risk. Any lost, stolen or damaged personal device should be reported immediately to the Dean of Students.

Posting and Translation of Policy
As required by law, this policy will be available in a clearly visible and accessible location on CACPCS'website. Translations of the policy spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state will be provided upon request by a student or parent.

Reporting and Mitigation Action Plan
As required by the NYSED, beginning September 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, CACPCS will publish an annual report on its website detailing enforcement of this policy during the prior school year. This report will include non-identifiable demographic data of students who have faced disciplinary action for non-compliance and analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a mitigation action plan.