



PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

General Belief	Learning is most powerful when students are fully present, engaged, and connected to their school communities. The responsible use of technology is essential to student success, but personal electronic devices can interfere with instruction, relationships, or wellbeing. Setting boundaries on the use by students of personal electronic devices helps students to develop self-discipline and the interpersonal skills needed for college, career, and life. By establishing consistent expectations across all schools, and supporting families, staff, and students in understanding the purpose of this Policy, the Providence School Board reinforces a shared commitment to opportunity, access, and learning for all.
Purpose and Scope	Unrestricted use of personal electronic devices during the school day can: 1. Disrupt teaching and learning, 2. Diminish student engagement and attention, 3. Contribute to bullying and privacy violations, and 4. Interfere with social–emotional well-being and peer relationships. This Policy governs usage of personal electronic devices by all students. This Policy shall be implemented by all Providence Public School District (“PPSD” or “District”) administrators, educators, counselors, and other staff responsible for monitoring and supporting students.
Definitions	The following definitions assist in understanding the Policy. 1. 504 Plan–A written document required under law in schools that receive federal funding that sets forth the agreed upon reasonable accommodations to be afforded students with disabilities, ensuring that those students can access a free and appropriate public education. 2. Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written document that defines the content of special education instruction and related services and supports to be provided to a student with a disability that allows that student to access a free and appropriate public education. 3. Multilingual Learner (MLL): A student who is learning English in addition to their native language(s). 4. Personal Electronic Device (PED): Any privately owned portable device capable of sending, receiving, storing, or displaying digital

	content (e.g. smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, smart glasses, wearable tech, portable music players, etc.). 5. Physical Access: Direct possession by a student of the PED (e.g. in pocket, bag, desk), such that it can be used or manipulated. 6. School Grounds: The physical premises of the school including its buildings, playing fields, playgrounds and recess areas, and any other location in which students are the responsibility of educators and school staff. 7. School-Sponsored Activities: Extracurricular and athletic activities, and school-related trips in which students are the responsibility of educators and school staff. 8. Student Day: The period during the day when students are on school grounds for the purpose of teaching and learning, beginning with arrival and ending with dismissal. This period includes lunch, recess periods, study hall, homeroom, common planning time, student passing time, and pre and post-schoolteacher time, and other all other non-instructional time between arrival and dismissal. 9. Instructional Time: The minimum five-and-one-half hours or three-hundred-and-thirty-minutes each school day when educators are delivering and students are receiving instructional and related services, as defined by state law (200-RICR-20-05-1.3(A)). This period does not include lunch or other breaks during the instructional day such as recess periods, study halls, homeroom periods, common planning time, student passing time and pre and post-schoolteacher time and any other time that is not actual instructional time.
Policy	Under the direction of the building Principal, and with input and collaboration by the school's various stakeholders, including by way of example the school improvement team, each school within the District shall develop a written plan to be known as the "Personal Electronic Device Plan" or "PED Plan." Each PED Plan must include the following provisions: 1. <i>Prohibition on Physical Access:</i> A prohibition on access by students to personal electronic devices during instructional time. The PED Plan shall include a description of an approved storage option, such as lockable pouches, classroom collection bins, or student lockers, which may vary based on building capacity and age or grade- level.

	2. <i>Additional Prohibitions and Limitations:</i> Additional limitations and prohibitions on access by students to personal electronic devices during all non-instructional periods during the student day (e.g., lunch, recess, passing time), and during school-sponsored activities. 3. <i>Communication:</i> A strategy whereby each school communicates to students, families, and staff the purpose of its PED Plan, and the expectations regarding it. The communication strategy should be multilingual and include a variety of approaches that may be both in person and in writing, through such events as orientations, open houses, student advisories, handbooks, signages, FAQ sheets, and/or announcements. Principals may consider integrating into a social-emotional learning (“SEL”) period a lesson on responsible device use, online safety, and media balance. 4. <i>Enforcement:</i> An enforcement strategy in which each school describes the procedures and processes for implementing the PED Plan fairly and equitably. Schools are encouraged to use restorative approaches to reinforce understanding and responsible use of technology and may also develop a “progressive discipline” approach for imposition of consequences, which shall be reflected not only in the PED Plan but also in the student code of conduct and the student handbook. 5. <i>Training:</i> A description of how each school plans to conduct staff training at the school level at the start of each school year. The training should include a discussion of cultural sensitivity and communication techniques and may include scenario-based practice on how to de-escalate resistance or confrontations related to device usage. Each school must submit its PED Plan to the Superintendent prior to the start of each school year. The Superintendent and/or their designees shall review all PED Plans for adherence to the District’s Goals and Guardrails, the Board’s Core Beliefs, and overall fairness, consistency, and alignment with this Policy and state law. No school official, employee, or agent of the school shall be permitted to conduct any kind of search of the contents of any personal electronic device retained by the school during school hours and not in the student’s possession in a locked pouch or container. All PED Plans shall include exceptions for use of personal electronic devices that provide access for students using assistive technology as part of their Section 504 Plans or IEP’s or for students with medical needs such as glucose monitoring, and/or for students who are emergent MLL’s in need of appropriate language access programs and services. All exceptions to any
--	--

	PEP Plan prohibition or restriction shall be written into the student's plan and approved by the appropriate educator, or team or coordinator.
Oversight	This Policy shall be reviewed at least every two years or upon changes to state law or District procedure. 1. The Superintendent and designees shall monitor implementation and provide technical assistance as needed. 2. The Superintendent may develop and issue rules/protocols setting forth the operational procedures for implementing the Policy.
Compliance	R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-21-43 becomes effective on August 1, 2026. All schools must therefore be in compliance with this Policy by the start of the 2026-2027 school year.
Legal Reference	R.I. Gen. Laws §16-21- R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-2-9 200-RICR-20-05-1.3(A) <i>In re the October 21, 2025 Request for a Declaratory Order-D.O. 26-01A by Angelica Infante-Green, Commissioner (Jan. 12, 2026)</i> ACLU of Rhode Island
Cross Reference	Student Code of Conduct
History	Policy Committee Review: May 12, 2026 Adopted by Board: June 17, 2026