



Scarborough Public Schools

August 12, 2026

New Scarborough Public Schools' Cell Phone Policy

Dear Families,

I hope this letter finds you well and in full enjoyment of what has been a remarkable Maine summer! I'm writing today to share an update with you about a statute and policy change, as you prepare to set your students off for an amazing year with Scarborough Public Schools. As we had communicated this spring prior to the close of school, as of August 1, 2026, a new Maine law, 20-A MRSA § 1001(23), requires all public schools to limit student access to personal electronic devices during the school day. This "bell-to-bell" requirement applies from the start of the school day until dismissal. Under the new law, all students must keep personal electronic devices—including cell phones, smartwatches, and other devices with internet or cellular capabilities—stored away and inaccessible from the first bell until dismissal. The law also applies to other personal electronic devices, including personal computers and other bring-your-own devices.



Last year, our district had instituted change in this direction, even before the statute. High school students were required to store their phones away at the start of each class, with limited access during lunch, while elementary and middle school students have had a longstanding bell-to-bell restriction on cell phones in our district.

As we make further changes this year to implement the new state law, the School Board has adopted [Policy J1CJ](#), replacing former policy JFCK, to clarify that Scarborough Public Schools' students will not carry, wear, or access cell phones, smartwatches, or other personal electronic

devices like Air Pods during the school day. Each school has established clear expectations, consistent procedures, and appropriate consequences to support successful implementation while honoring the limited exceptions permitted under state law. Schools will share these school-specific expectations and disciplinary measures directly with families in separate communications.

We recognize that families may have questions, particularly about communication during the school day. Student safety will continue to be our highest priority. Students will have access to school staff and school-based phones if they need to contact home, and families can always reach their children through the school office when necessary. Coaches, advisors, and school staff will also continue to communicate important schedule changes and updates through established channels.

We are committed to implementing these changes thoughtfully and consistently while supporting our students and staff through this transition. We appreciate your continued partnership and support.

Respectfully,

Diane Nadeau, Ph.D.
Superintendent

**SCARBOROUGH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
Empowering learners. Building community.

**FOCUSED LEARNING.
STRONGER TOGETHER.**



**BELL-TO-BELL
NO PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**
Policy Based on Maine Law
Scarborough Public Schools

Maine law requires school administrative units to adopt a policy that prohibits student use of personal electronic devices during the school day. Scarborough Public Schools' policy supports student learning, well-being, and safe, respectful school environments.

**Maine Law**
20-A MRSA § 1001(23)

**THE RULE: BELL-TO-BELL**
From the first bell to the final bell of the school day, students may not use personal electronic DEVICES.

This includes, but is not limited to:


Cell Phones Earbuds/Headphones Smart Watches PERSONAL Tablets PERSONAL Laptops

Devices must be powered off or silenced and stored away in backpacks, lockers, or other locations as directed by staff.

**EXCEPTIONS**
Use of personal electronic devices is permitted only when:

 Required for a student's health or medical needs

 Included in a student's IEP, 504 plan, or health plan

 Access to other translation mechanisms aren't available for emergent language learners, with administrative approval. This will be used with administrative approval.

**WHY IT MATTERS**
Research shows that limiting device use:

 Improves focus and academic achievement

 Reduces distractions and classroom interruptions

 Supports student mental health and well-being

 Strengthens in-person connections and school community

**CONSEQUENCES**
Consequences for policy violations will be age-appropriate and implemented consistently. They may include:

 Verbal reminder

 Device confiscation and return to student at end of day

 Parent/guardian contact

Additional disciplinary steps are outlined at each phase level in school handbooks online.

**The Scarborough Public School System has NO RESPONSIBILITY for loss, theft or damage for any PED brought to school.**

**A PARTNERSHIP**
We appreciate your partnership in helping students stay present, engaged, and ready to learn—bell to bell.

QUESTIONS?
Contact your school or visit our website:
scarboroughschools.org

**KNOW THE POLICY**
Scarborough Public Schools Personal Electronic Devices Policy is policy-21CJ.
Read the full policy on our website.

**SCARBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS** | 259 U.S. ROUTE 1, SCARBOROUGH, ME 04074 | 207-730-4100 | SCARBOROUGH5CHOOLS.ORG



Scarborough Schools

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