PLUMSTED TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
131 Evergreen Road • New Egypt, New Jersey 08533 • (609) 758-6800

FAMILY FAQ

Phone-Free School Day • 2026–2027

Prepared for Plumsted families

Why is this happening now?

New Jersey's bell-to-bell law (P.L. 2025, c. 195), signed in January 2026, requires every district to restrict non-academic student device use during the school day starting in 2026–27. Districts that made the change early are reporting more focused classes and healthier social time. Plumsted's policy (Board Policy 5516) implements the law.

What exactly is restricted, and when?

Non-academic use of personal internet-enabled devices — phones, smartwatches, earbuds, tablets, gaming devices — from the first bell to the final bell, including lunch, passing time, and study halls. District-issued iPads and Chromebooks or other classroom technology are not affected.

What is TRUCE Family, and why did the district choose software instead of pouches?

TRUCE Family is a device management app that automatically puts your child's phone into "School Mode" when they arrive on campus and releases it when they leave. The board chose it because it enforces the rule the same way for every student, every day — without asking teachers to become phone police, without locked pouches that block phones even in emergencies, and without bins of expensive devices to manage. There is no hardware to buy, break, or lose.

Can my child call 911?

Yes — always. Emergency calling is never blocked, and state law guarantees that students may use devices in an emergency or when a perceived threat of danger exists. In a building emergency, administration can also immediately lift all restrictions.

Is the school reading my child's phone?

No. School Mode manages which functions and apps are available during school hours — nothing more. It does not read messages, view photos, track browsing, or store personal content. Location is used only to know whether the device is inside the school geofence.

TRUCE is SOC 2 certified and complies with federal (FERPA) and New Jersey student privacy laws.

Does the school track my child's location after school?

No. The geofence check exists only to switch School Mode on and off. Outside school grounds and school hours, the district imposes no restrictions and sees nothing.

My child has a medical condition / an IEP / a 504 plan. What happens?

Their access is protected. Medical needs (like continuous glucose monitors), IEP and 504 accommodations, translation needs, and approved caregiver responsibilities are configured as individual exception profiles that work automatically. Your child is never singled out, and no visible pass is required. Contact the school nurse or case manager, or submit Form 5516-A to the main office.

How do I reach my child during the day?

Call the main office at (609) 758-6800 — messages are delivered promptly, and for anything urgent, your child will be brought to a phone immediately. Please don't text or call their device during school hours; with School Mode active, they won't see it until dismissal anyway. If you have emergency messaging, you can communicate with your child within the app.

What if we don't want to install the app?

Enrollment is the easiest path, but it's your choice. If you decline, your child stores their device powered off in their locker for the full school day.

What happens after school and at events?

Restrictions lift automatically at the final bell. For school buses and certain school-sanctioned events, restrictions apply as designated by the Superintendent, consistent with state guidelines.

What if my child breaks the rule?

Honest answer: with School Mode, most of the old “phone out in class” moments simply can't happen. Consequences apply to deliberate workarounds — tampering, using a second phone, pulling a stored device out. A first incident means the device waits in the main office, and you get a call. Repeats escalate under the Code of Conduct.

Who do I contact with questions?

Your building principal, or the district office at (609) 758-6800. The full policy and regulation are posted on the district website.

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