

Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day

New York State Education Law §2803 requires school districts to adopt and implement a policy prohibiting students from using internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds. The law applies to smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and other devices capable of connecting to the internet and accessing internet content, including social media applications. The law defines the school day as including both instructional and non-instructional time, including homeroom, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

The purpose of Forestville Central School District's policy is to promote a focused learning environment, reduce distractions, encourage meaningful student interaction and engagement, and support student well-being. The District's Board of Education has adopted Policy #7316 – Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day following consultation with local stakeholders, including employee organizations, parents, administrators, and students.

What does this mean for students?

During the school day, students are generally prohibited from using personal internet-enabled devices anywhere on school grounds. This includes instructional and non-instructional periods such as classes, homeroom, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

As outlined in Policy #7316, students are required to store their internet-enabled devices in designated on-site storage areas during the school day. At Forestville, students will generally store their devices in their lockers. Students may keep their devices in their lockers during the school day, but they may not access or use them during the school day unless an authorized exception applies.

When may a student use an internet-enabled device?

New York State law and District Policy #7316 provide limited circumstances in which student use of an internet-enabled device may be authorized. These include:

- When authorized by a teacher, principal, or the District for a specific educational purpose;
- When necessary for the management of a student's healthcare;
- In the event of an emergency;
- For translation services;

- On a case-by-case basis for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member, following the review process established in the policy;
- When required by law; or
- When the use is included in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Use required by an IEP or Section 504 Plan will be permitted consistent with those plans.

How can parents and guardians contact their students?

If a parent or person in parental relation needs to communicate with a student during the school day, they should contact the school's main office. School personnel will assist with communicating the message to the student or, when appropriate, bringing the student to the office.

Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day may use a school telephone or another District-provided communication method with permission.

What happens if a student uses a device in violation of the policy?

The District will address violations through progressive and developmentally appropriate consequences consistent with Policy #7316 and the District's Code of Conduct. The District will work to implement the policy consistently and equitably.

A student may not be suspended solely for accessing an internet-enabled device in violation of the District's policy, as expressly provided by New York State Education Law §2803.

Annual Reporting and Equity Review

Beginning September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the District will publish a report on its website regarding enforcement of the internet-enabled device policy during the prior school year. The report will include non-identifiable demographic information concerning students who received disciplinary consequences for non-compliance and an analysis of demographic disparities in enforcement, as required by New York State Education Law §2803.

For the 2025-2026 school year, the District documented eleven incidents involving violations of its distraction-free school/device-use expectations. In each documented incident, the student's cell phone was confiscated and secured for the remainder of the school day. Beginning with a student's second offense, the student's parent or guardian was notified.

The District reviewed the available enforcement data and considered whether there was evidence of a disparate enforcement impact among student demographic groups. Based on the data available for this reporting period, the District did not identify a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact requiring a mitigation action plan.

The District will continue to monitor enforcement data and review the implementation of Policy #7316 to ensure that the policy is applied consistently, fairly, and equitably. If future analysis identifies a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact, the District will review its implementation practices and develop an appropriate mitigation action plan as required by law.