



Albion Central School District **Frequently Asked Questions - Device Policy**



Q1: What does New York State law say about internet-connected device use in schools?

A: Starting in the 2025–26 school year, all New York public schools must follow a “bell-to-bell” rule that bans student use of personal internet-connected devices (like smartphones, smartwatches, and tablets) during the school day. Devices must be off and away from the first bell to the last, including lunch and hallway time. Schools must offer secure storage and provide a clear way for families to contact students in case of emergencies. This policy is meant to limit distractions and help students stay focused and engaged during the school day. ([Link to Governor Hochul's press release](#))

Q2: What are our school's guidelines on cell phone use during the school day?

A: Students are not allowed to use any cell phone (including but not limited to any internet-enabled devices or standard cellular devices) during the instructional day, including during class time, lunch, and hallway transitions. All phones/devices must be off and put away (stored in hallway lockers for HS and MS, stored in classrooms for ES).

Q3: Why are there cell phone and internet-enabled device restrictions in schools?

A: Restrictions on cell phones and all internet-enabled devices aims to:

- Minimize distractions in the learning environment
 - Protect student privacy
 - Promote face-to-face communication and social-emotional development
 - Reduce cyberbullying and inappropriate content exposure during the school day
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Q4: Can students use their personal devices during lunch or free periods?

A: No. To maintain consistency and reduce misuse, personal device use is not permitted during any part of the school day, including lunch and unstructured time.

Q5: What if I need to contact my child during the day?

A: If there's an urgent matter, parents should contact the main office via phone or email, and a message will be relayed to the student. Students may also request permission to use a school phone if needed. Building contact information can be located on the district's website.



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Q6: Are there exceptions to the rule?

A: Students with a documented medical need involving the limited use of a personal device will work with administration to develop an appropriate plan on a case-by-case basis with the continued goal of minimizing distractions in the learning environment. (*Internet-Enabled Device Accommodation Request Form* can be found on the district website)

Q7: What are the consequences for violating the cell phone policy?

A: The school follows a progressive discipline model

1. **First offense:** The student will be sent to the office. The cell phone/ device will be turned into the main office and kept in a secure location. The cell phone/ device will be returned to the student at the end of the instructional day.
2. **Second offense:** The student will be sent to the office. The cell phone/ device will be turned into the main office and kept in a secure location. A parent/ guardian must pick up the cell phone/ device from the main office.
3. **Repeated offenses:** The student will be sent to the office. The cell phone/ device will be turned into the main office and kept in a secure location. A parent/ guardian must pick up the cell phone/ device from the main office. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent/ guardian and building administration to develop a plan moving forward.

Additional consequences for insubordination may be assigned on a case-by-case basis.

Q8: Can students bring cell phones and/or personal devices to school at all?

A: Students may bring cell phones and/or personal devices. Prior to the first bell, students must turn devices off and store them in the designated area (hallway lockers). After the last bell, students may access their devices from the storage area. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Q9: What about smartwatches, earbuds, or other devices?

A: Any device that is internet enabled is not allowed. In addition, standard cellular devices are also not allowed.



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Q10: How can parents support the policy at home?

A: You can help by:

- Discussing the importance of staying focused during school hours
 - Encouraging responsible digital habits
 - Avoiding texting your child during class hours
 - Reviewing and reinforcing school expectations at home
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Q11: What is the procedure for students who arrive late or leave early from school?

A: Late arrival and early dismissal processes will work the same and will include students going to their lockers/ cubbies to store or retrieve their cell phone and/or personal device(s).

Q12: What is the policy and/or procedure for students who attend BOCES or other locations?

A: BOCES and other programs are required by law to develop a plan for storage of cell phones and personal devices. Students will follow and abide by those plans.

Q13: Do field trips count as the instructional day, even if you are off school property?

A: Field trips during school hours are a part of the school day and students will be expected to follow the same protocol and procedures.

Q14: What if there is an emergency situation on campus or within a school?

A: In the event of an emergency the school will communicate with families through official channels such as ParentSquare, which includes robo calls, emails, and text alerts.

If you have **general questions** regarding this law and the district's procedures, [please submit your questions using this Google form](#).

If you have **specific questions**, regarding your child, please contact their building principal directly.

****This FAQ document will be updated with relevant questions and answers periodically.***