



## Rome City School District Policy 5695

**(X) Required**

☐ Local

☐ Notice

### **STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (DRAFT)**

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices that can perform different functions. Such devices include “internet-enabled devices” defined as: any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications, but do not include any such device supplied by the district for educational purposes. These devices can create significant distraction to the school learning environment, negatively impact student mental health, contribute to disciplinary infractions, and reduce student engagement. Additionally, in an emergency, the use of personal electronic devices can distract students from following the directions of staff or emergency responders, contribute to the spread of misinformation, create congestion in the emergency response system, and interfere with the district’s emergency response protocols.

#### **I. Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation**

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents/guardians (which, for purposes of this policy, includes persons in parental relation) may contact their children via the following methods: calling the school main office, the school’s provided email address, the district’s communication app (e.g. ParentSquare). Students may contact their parents from the school’s main office. The district will notify families in writing of the communication protocol at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

#### **II. Device Access and Storage**

As required by Education Law §2803, this policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time), on school grounds (any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school or district or BOCES facility), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504)

- A. At the elementary school levels (Prek-6), students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. Any device that is brought to school must be silenced and kept in a locked storage container in the classroom or the main office.

- B. At the secondary levels (7-12), student devices must be turned off and stored in a lock box in their 9<sup>th</sup> period class, or an alternate location as deemed appropriate by school leaders.

### **III. Exceptions for Specific Purposes**

Use of internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, or where required by law. Additionally, the district permits the use of internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency and under the following circumstances:

- A. Where necessary to manage a student's healthcare (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.);
- B. For translation services; and/or
- C. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor).

Parents/guardians may request an exception for their children to use internet-enabled devices during the school day as listed above. Requests must be made to the Building Principal, and for healthcare exceptions, must include documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional.

### **IV. Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting**

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of building-level administrative staff; however, all employees are expected to assist in the enforcement and modeling of the behavior expected of students. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

For students out of compliance with this policy, the device will be held in the school main office until the end of the school day. The first time this happens, the student may retrieve the device at the end of the school day, and the parent will be notified. For subsequent instances, the parent must retrieve the device. Further instances will result in the device being held in the school main office for longer periods of time. The district will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the district, but cannot guarantee the devices will be secure. *Generally, the district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.*

For students with exceptions under this policy, the district will examine alternative ways to achieve the purpose of the exception, including different storage or access provisions.

Administrators will also discuss the aims of this policy with students and their families, the benefits of a distraction-free environment, the reasons the student had difficulty following this policy, and how the district can help the student contribute to a distraction-free environment.

The district may *NOT* impose suspension from school if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device as prohibited by this policy.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the Rome City School District Code of Conduct or other district policies, and in some situations, the law. In these instances, the district may utilize consequences under the district's Code of Conduct, including detention, in-school suspension, and exclusion from extracurricular activities. The district may also utilize assignments on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health, smartphones in school, or other relevant topics. The district will also cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

Beginning September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the district will publish an annual report on its website detailing the enforcement of this policy over the past year, including non-identifiable demographic information of students who have faced disciplinary action for non-compliance with this policy, and an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a plan to mitigate such disparate enforcement.

## **V. Electronic Devices and Testing**

To ensure the integrity of testing, in accordance with state guidelines, students may not bring cell phones or other electronic devices into classrooms or other exam locations during the administration of state assessments.

Test proctors, monitors and school officials have the right to collect cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test and to hold them for the duration of the test taking time. Admission to the test will be prohibited to any student who has a cell phone or other electronic device in their possession and does not relinquish it.

Students with Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 Plans, or documentation from medical practitioners specifically requiring use of electronic devices may do so as specified.

## **VI. Policy Distribution and Translation**

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on the website. Upon request by a student or family, the district will translate this policy into any of the twelve most common non-English languages in the state, as identified by the most recent American community survey published by the U.S. Census bureau, for individuals whose primary mode of communication is other than English.

The district will also include this information, or a plain language summary, in student/family handbooks.

Cross-ref: 4526, Computer Use in Instruction  
4526.1, Internet Safety  
1026, Code of Conduct

Ref: Education Law §2803

*Price v. New York City Board of Education*, 51 A.D.3d 277, lv. to appeal denied, 11 N.Y.3d 702 (2008) (District may ban possession of cell phones on school property)

NYSED, *Prohibition of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in New York State Assessments*, [www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments](http://www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments)

**First Read: August 4, 2025**

**Second Read: August 18, 2025**

Adoption date:TBD

