



AWAY FOR THE DAY at Scituate High School FAQ

1. Why did Scituate High School implement the Away for the Day Initiative?

The initiative is Scituate's response to the Rhode Island state law requiring school districts to craft a policy that reduces distractions, maintains environments focused on learning, and protects the privacy of students and staff by prohibiting student access to personal electronic devices (PEDs).

2. What is a PED?

A PED is a Personal Electronic Device and it refers to all laptops, tablets, and desktop computers; smartphones; wearables such as smartwatches, earbuds, or headphones; or any other electronic devices that connect to the internet or a wireless network or that run software or programming of any kind and that are owned by students and families, not by the Scituate School Department.

3. What is Scituate High School's Away for the Day policy?

The policy aims to reduce the use of personal devices at school and applies to all students during the school day, from the first bell to the final dismissal bell. Devices should be:

- Off or silenced.
- Stored out of sight (in lockers, backpacks, or designated classroom storage).
- Inaccessible for personal use in any classroom setting.

4. Why is SHS implementing this initiative this year?

Based on feedback from teachers and families regarding distractions and inappropriate content sharing, the Scituate School Department made the decision to limit PED use before the state law is enacted to continue to grow a more focused and supportive learning environment.

5. What is the rationale for the Away for the Day initiative?

Research and our observations show unrestricted cell phone use during school hours:

Distracts from learning: Notifications, social media, and personal communication can pull student attention away from instruction and academic tasks.

Hinders social development: Students may rely on devices instead of engaging in face-to-face interactions, limiting the development of crucial social skills.

Contributes to cyberbullying and inappropriate content sharing: Devices can be used for negative peer interactions or to record and share inappropriate material, impacting school safety and student well-being.

Impacts mental health: Excessive screen time and social media use are linked to increased anxiety, depression, and comparison among adolescents.

Creates inequity: Differences in device access or features can create social disparities among students.





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6. Are there times when using a PED during the school day will be allowed?

Yes. Students will be allowed to use PEDs during their lunch wave. This is a privilege that will be revoked on an individual basis or school-wide basis if PEDs are being used inappropriately.

Exceptions will also be made in the following circumstances:

Medical necessity: For students with a documented medical plan (e.g., IEP, 504 plan) that requires access to a device for health monitoring or communication. Parents/guardians must provide relevant documentation to the school office.

Teacher directed instructional use: A teacher may explicitly permit the use of a device for an educational activity within the classroom. This use will be supervised and limited to the designated task.

Emergency situations: In the event of a school-wide emergency, students will NOT be denied their PEDs. For individual student emergencies, parents can reach their child by calling the main office at 401-647-4120. Messages will be delivered promptly.

7. Can students take their devices to the restroom, nurse, or counseling suite?

Students will not be able to bring their PEDs with them when they leave the room unless directed by an administrator, staff member, or medical requirement (such as when a device is used for medical monitoring). The devices must remain in lockers, backpacks, or in designated classroom storage spaces.

8. How can parents/guardians get in touch with students during school hours?

We encourage families to communicate through the main office during school hours if an urgent message needs to be relayed. This helps us maintain a consistent learning environment for all students.

9. How will SHS be enforcing the Away for the Day initiative?

Consistent enforcement is critical to the success of this initiative. A violation means that a student removes a cellphone/ PED out of their backpack and/or the designated classroom holder, at any point, during a class period. Violations will result in the following actions:

First Offense: The device will be confiscated by school staff and held in the main office and will be returned to the student at the dismissal bell in the office near the gym lobby. Parents/guardians will be notified.

Second Offense: The device will be confiscated by school staff and held in the main office and will be returned to the student at the dismissal bell in the office near the gym lobby. Parents/guardians will be notified. A school consequence will be issued.

Third and Subsequent Offenses: The device will be confiscated and held in the main office. A parent/guardian will be required to pick up the device. Further disciplinary action will be taken, which may include in school detention, and/or social suspension, and/or requiring the student to check their phone into the main office daily upon arrival for a designated period of time.

