

DRAFT POLICY

Title: STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Code 5695

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices that can perform different functions. Such devices include but are not limited to: phones (both smartphones and call/text only phones), tablets, smart watches, wireless headphones and earbuds, internet-connected accessories, e-readers, calculators, voice recorders, cameras and music devices. These devices can create significant distraction to the school environment 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.

The district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school. During the school day, to minimize distractions, students and their parents/persons in parental relation are asked to communicate via the school. Building staff must educate families on the building's communication protocol.

At the elementary school level, student personal electronic devices may not be brought to school. At the middle and high school level, student personal electronic devices must be turned off and put away in school issued lockers from the time students enter the school building until the end of the school day, including time spent in class, lunch, study hall, detention, in-school suspension, and between classes.

Based on administrative discretion and budgetary allowances, where students are allowed to bring their devices to school, this policy may be implemented through methods including, but not limited to, individual locked pouches, classroom cubbies, centralized lockers, other technology or equipment, or by students keeping their devices in their own lockers or bags.

Exemptions and Exceptions

Parents or persons in parental relation may request an exemption for their children to use personal electronic devices during the school day for bona fide medical, educational, or disability-related reasons. Requests must be requested from the Building Principal and must include documentation from an appropriate medical or educational professional. The district must first determine that a district-issued device cannot reasonably be used instead of the student's personal electronic device. The least disruptive device possible may be used. If an exemption has been granted, personal devices may only be used for the purposes outlined in the exemption, and the device must be silenced and put away when not in use.

In emergency situations, exceptions to the prohibition of the use of personal electronic devices may be granted by teachers or administrators.

Enforcement and Consequences

Enforcement of this policy is the responsibility of building administrative staff; however, all employees are expected to assist in enforcement and modeling the behavior expected of students. Administrators will discuss the aims of this policy with students and their parents/persons in parental relations, the benefits of a distraction-free environment, the reasons the student had difficulty following this policy, and how the district can help the student. Subsequent violations may also result in consequences under the district's Code of Conduct. Specific consequences will be described in Regulation 5695 and Exhibit 5695.

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. However, 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.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the school district Code of Conduct, and in some instances, the law. The district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

Policy Distribution and Translation

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on its website. Upon request by a student or parent, the district will translate this policy into any of the twelve most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state, as identified by the most recent American community survey published by the U.S. Census bureau. The district will also include this information, or a plain language summary, in student/family handbooks.

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 nonidentifiable demographic information of students who have faced disciplinary action for noncompliance with this policy, and an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this 5695 policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a plan to mitigate such disparate enforcement.

Cross-ref:

4526, Computer Use in Instruction
5300, Code of Conduct

Ref:

Price v. New York City Board of Education, 16 Misc.3d 543 (2007)
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.

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