Students and Personal Electronic Devices

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices, including internet-enabled devices as defined in the section below. These devices perform a variety of functions but also can create significant distraction to the school 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.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

a) "Internet-enabled devices" means and includes 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;

"Internet-enabled devices" does not include:

1. Non-internet-enabled devices such as cellular phones or other communication devices not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the user to access content on the Internet; or

2. Internet-enabled devices supplied by the District, charter school, or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) that are used for an educational purpose.

b) "School day" means the entirety of every instructional day as defined by Education Law § 3604(7), during all instructional time and non-instructional time, including but not limited to homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

c) "School grounds" means in or on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a district elementary, intermediate, middle, vocational, or high school, a charter school, or a BOCES facility.

Methods for Parents and Persons in Parental Relation to Contact Students During the School Day

During the school day, parents (which, for purposes of this policy includes persons in parental relation) may use the following methods to contact their student(s) during school hours:

a) Phone: Parents may contact their children by calling the school's main office. Office staff will relay messages or, when appropriate, call the student to the office to speak directly with their parent. Students may also contact their parents using a designated phone located in the school office.

b) Public Address (PA) System: In case of an emergency, the school's main office may use the PA system to notify students directly or ask them to come to the office.

c) School-Issued Student Email: Parents may email their children in grades 3-12 directly via the student's school-issued, student-specific email address. All students will be issued a Chromebook and will have access to their email throughout the school day.

Parents will be notified in writing of these communication methods at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

On-Site Storage of Internet-Enabled Devices Including Cell Phones

Students must store their Internet-enabled devices in designated on-site storage areas during the school day. On-site storage areas may include, but are not limited to, student lockers, designated storage bins in classrooms, school-issued personal device storage pouches or secure storage areas in the school's main office. The designated on-site storage areas will be easily accessible to students and the district will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of student devices. The District will communicate the procedures for storing and retrieving devices, ensuring that students understand their responsibilities in using the on-site storage facilities provided.

Generally, the district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Students are generally prohibited from using internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds consistent with Education Law § 2803 to prevent continuous, unsupervised student access. When possible, the District will provide school-issued assistive technology for students who require access to specific applications for educational or support purposes.

However, students may be authorized to use an Internet-enabled device during the school day on school grounds:

a) If authorized by a teacher, principal, or the District for a specific educational purpose;

b) Where necessary for the management of a student's health care;

c) In the event of an emergency (an emergency includes any situation in which a student believes they are at risk of harm or requires immediate assistance);

d) For translation services and/or plan of required supports/services for English Language Learners (ELLs) and the District cannot provide a reasonable alternative; and

e) On a case-by-case basis, upon review by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, and with the approval of a building administrator, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member.

Parents may request an exception in writing for their children to use internet-enabled devices during the school day as described above. Requests must be made to the Building Principal and must provide an adequate explanation of the need. For healthcare-related exceptions, the request must include

documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional sufficient to allow the District to determine whether an exception is medically necessary and appropriate.

Students must be permitted to use an Internet-enabled device where the use is included in the student's:

a) Individualized Education Program (IEP); or

b) Section 504 Plan; or

c) Where required by law.

Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting

Enforcement of this policy is the primary responsibility of building administrators, with support from all staff. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

Administrators will discuss the aims of this policy with students and their parents, 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. Administrators will be responsible for determining consequences for violations of the policy.

The district may not impose suspension from school if the sole ground 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 district Code of Conduct or other policies, and in some instances, the law. The district will 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.

Adult Internet-Enabled Device Using around Students

Staff use of personal internet-enabled devices in the presence of students is prohibited unless for job-related purposes or emergencies.

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/guardian, 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.

Cross-ref: Computer Usage and Internet Safety (Section IV, Policy No. 19)
Code of Conduct (Section IV, Policy No. 30)

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