



— SAUQUOIT VALLEY —
RED HAWKS™

*SVCSD Smartphone Bell to Bell Ban:
FAQ and Procedures*

Please find the link to the SVCSD policy on Student Use of Internet Enabled Devices here:

[Policy 7208 - Student Use of Internet Enabled Devices](#)

Rationale:

What is a “bell to bell smartphone ban” and why is it necessary?

A bell to bell smartphone ban means that students are not permitted to use smartphones or other personal internet-enabled devices at any time during the instructional school day, from the moment the first bell rings in the morning until the final dismissal bell at the end of the day. The ban includes classrooms, hallways, libraries, cafeterias, study halls, and other common areas within the school building during school hours.

Under the NYS provisions, students would still be authorized to have access to simple cell phones without internet capability, as well as internet-enabled devices **officially provided by their school** for classroom instruction (i.e. school issued Chromebooks).

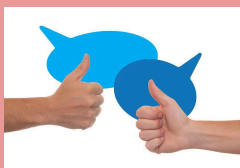
The implementation of a bell to bell smartphone ban is a measure aimed at fostering a more positive and productive learning environment for all students. All schools in NYS must implement a bell to bell smartphone policy and ban in alignment with recent state governmental guidance ([Click here for legislation](#)). Schools are also accountable for tracking compliance and enforcement of their plans as well as reporting data annually. The goals of this ban at SVCSD are promoting a safe school environment, student well-being, academic focus, and enhancing positive social interactions.

Benefits of a Smartphone Free School



Focused Environment:

Minimize distractions to maximize learning and engagement



Social Interaction:

Foster more direct discussion and face to face interactions between students



Safer Spaces:

Reduce cyberbullying and dependence on technology

What does the research say?

Numerous studies within the United States and internationally have indicated that increased academic success rates and decreased behavioral referrals occurred after implementing phone restrictions. Teachers also reported improved student attentiveness. Banning smartphones may encourage more face-to-face interaction, which is crucial for developing social skills and

strengthening school communities. Some schools with bans report increased social interaction among students. Excessive smartphone and social media use is linked to negative mental health outcomes. Banning phones in schools can reduce exposure to these risks during school hours. Some schools report improvements in student mental health and reduced bullying after bans. The presence of smartphones can be distracting and reduce cognitive capacity. Banning them can help students concentrate on learning.

Procedures:

How would I contact my child if there is an emergency?

The following options can all be utilized to communicate:

For parents contacting students:

- Call the school's main office for urgent messages or schedule changes:
 - Elementary School: (315) 839-6339
 - Middle School: (315) 839-6371
 - High School: (315) 839-6316

For Students Contacting Parents:

- Students should inform their teacher or staff if there is a need to call home
- Designated phones in school offices (main office, counseling office, nurse, etc.) will be available for emergencies

For School-Wide Emergencies SVCSD Will Notify Families Through:

- Automated calls or texts (via Parent Square)
- Email updates
- School website and social media

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Emergency responders have advised that students should not contact others or use devices during an emergency as it can overload communication channels for emergency response, inadvertently spread misinformation, and compromise one's safety.*

*Centralized mass notification from an official source (i.e. the school) is the highly recommended best practice.**

Are there any circumstances or considerations where my child could have a smartphone or internet enabled personal device due to a documented need?

Yes, NYS guidance allows students to have internet accessible devices for students who have a compelling need evidenced by:

- An Individualized Education Plan
- A Critical Health Management Plan (i.e. need a Diabetes monitor to track blood sugar)
- A 504 Plan
- Translation Purposes

Furthermore, if an emergency situation occurs where typical school to home communication protocols outlined above are not successful, students may use their devices if doing so helps address the emergency concern. Please note that:

- School based communications must be attempted first
- The student must have permission from a school psychologist, counselor, social worker, or administrator to use their device prior to using it
- The device will be used in an office space with staff present

In addition to smartphones, what other devices are not allowed during the school day?

NYS provisions prohibit students from utilizing the following devices during the school day:

- Smart watches
- Personal laptops/ tablets
- Wireless earbuds or headphones
- Portable video game devices with internet capabilities
- Music devices with internet streaming capabilities
- Any other internet connected accessories

Students will be able to utilize school issued Chromebooks for instructional purposes.

What are the expectations for my child's smartphone/ devices during the school day, start to finish?

1. Smartphone usage by students while riding to and from school on a bus, or on a bus during school-sponsored activities is generally allowed. However, distracting behavior that creates an unsafe environment will not be tolerated and all expectations for responsible use as outlined in the Code of Conduct still apply.
2. Smartphones and/or personal devices must be kept off or silenced in the student's locker during instructional day (from first bell to last) and students may retrieve their phones following the dismissal bell.
3. Smartphones and/or personal devices are not permitted in the classroom at any time.
4. All smartphone and/or device usage is prohibited in the hallways, restrooms, locker rooms, cafeteria, and any other facilities during the instructional day.
5. Parents/guardians who need to contact their child who have smartphones should remind them to turn the cell phone off during school hours, and check for messages after school is dismissed.
6. Students who need to make calls during the instructional day should obtain permission to utilize the phones located in the main office, counseling office, or nurse's office.
7. If there is an emergency situation where the parent or legal guardian needs to contact their child, they are to contact the school's main office, and staff will assist in contacting their child.
8. The use of a cell phone by a student to take, store, or transmit photos, video, or digital images of any kind is not allowed at any time on school premises during the instructional day without prior approval.

What are the consequences for a violation of smartphone protocols?

To ensure the integrity of the learning environment and promote responsible behavior, the following consequences will be consistently applied for students who do not adhere to the bell to bell cell phone policy:

- **First Offense:** A warning will be issued and the student will return their phone to their locker immediately.
- **Second Offense:** The cell phone will be **confiscated and secured in the main office.** The phone will be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- **Third Offense:** The cell phone will be **confiscated and secured in the main office.** A **parent or guardian will be required to pick up the device** from the school.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** The cell phone will be **confiscated and secured in the main office.** A **parent/guardian conference with school administration** will be required before the phone is returned and a complete ban of the phone will result for a period of time.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please be aware that NYS Law strictly prohibits suspending a student solely for smartphone/ internet enabled device violations.

Please note that further disciplinary action, such as detention, may also be assigned in accordance with the student Code of Conduct. Please also be aware that the context and/or severity of the situation may result in more immediate consequences than the sequence outlined above. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding.

Thank you!