

Frequently Asked Questions - Personal Electronic Devices (PED)

Why is our school excited about adopting a PED policy?

We're glad to be joining the growing wave of schools in the U.S. and Canada going phone-free. The school day (8:15 - 3:15) is when students need to be able to focus, learn, interact with each other, build in-person communities, and engage with teachers. Study data shows that having a cell phone decreases student test scores. A phone and social media free school gives students back many needed opportunities for development.

What is included in a PED definition?

- Cell phones (both phones that connect to the internet and non-internet connected phones that send and receive text messages, and make phone calls)
- Personal electronic devices such as electronic tablets and video games
- AirPods, earbuds and Bluetooth connected headphones
- Smartwatches and fitness trackers that connect to the internet

What if my child needs their phone in case of a crisis or lockdown at the school?

School security experts say phones can make children less safe in crisis situations for the following reasons:

- Students must focus on adult instructions. Phones distract from life-saving guidance given by teachers or first responders.
- Phones compromise hiding and lockdown efforts. Light and sound from phones can reveal student locations to an assailant.
- Emergency communication channels must stay clear. Mass calls or texts can overwhelm networks, delaying first responder coordination.
- Parents rushing to school can delay emergency access. Traffic caused by concerned parents may block or slow emergency vehicle response.
- Crowds create confusion. More people near the building increase risks and may complicate identification of threats.
- Schools are equipped to manage emergency communications. Trained personnel handle information flow and reduce misinformation.

For more information: [National Association of School Resource Officers](#)

How do I contact my student during the school day?

(i.e. schedule change, after-school activity)

Parents and/or guardians who need to contact their student during the school day and or change the dismissal time of your child, may do so by calling the main office. Messages will be given to students between each class period. Contacting your child via their

cell phone during the school day distracts them from their studies and the needed in-person interaction with their teachers and peers. By having 24/7 access, we prevent growth opportunities that our children need educationally, socially, and developmentally. If students text their parents every time they have a question, they miss the opportunity to think for themselves and develop problem solving skills.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?

If the student needs to contact their parent or guardian during the school day, a phone will be available in the main office that may be used before and after school, during passing time, or during lunch.

Why can't teachers be in charge of the class and collect the PEDs?

Students need consistency and one policy for the entire school benefits all. Teachers benefit by regaining classroom instructional time instead of having to police PEDs, as monitoring take time and energy away from teaching and supporting students. If there is a consistently enforced building-wide policy in place then students are less likely to push back on the policy.

Why is it important to allow our children to be independent during the school day?

Students need to be given independence from their parents or guardians during the school day to develop foundational skills. Constant contact can fuel a cycle of anxiety for both students and parents. Research shows encouraging independence fosters a child's self-confidence, resilience, problem-solving ability, and mental health.

What if my child has a medical condition that must be monitored by their cell phone?

The school shall require documentation from a licensed medical professional to support an exemption such as diabetes or seizure monitoring. This exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits PED use for any other purposes.

What if my child has an IEP/504 plan?

It is extremely rare for a cell phone to be required for an IEP/504 plan. But if the situation did arise, documentation is required and the exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits cell phone use for any other purposes.

Will it be harder for students to make connections and friends if they are offline all day?

Social media tends to foster asynchronous interactions leading to greater levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. In-person socializing forms far stronger connections and supports the development of healthier social and emotional skills.

Don't some students benefit from having social media?

Even for students who use social media for connection and activism, it is still a distraction during school hours. As a school community, we work hard to foster a culture of inclusion. Our goal is to limit use during the school day to minimize disruption and mitigate the potential harms of social media dependency and exposure to harmful content.

Isn't it better to teach kids to use phones responsibly rather than take them away?

Brain science research and expert psychiatrists say the adolescent brain is not able to manage the addictive pull of PEDs and social media. The social media platforms and games that young people spend much time on were deliberately designed to be addictive. Additionally, part of teaching responsible use is creating phone-free zones that help students understand that PEDs are a tool to be used at specific times in specific ways, rather than being something that is on and used 24/7.

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