HIGH SCHOOL OF AMERICAN STUDIES AT LEHMAN COLLEGE
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Dear Students and Families:

As per Education Law §2803, all New York State schools are required to adopt a policy that prohibits the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds.

An "internet-enabled electronic device" is defined as any device capable of connecting to the internet. Examples of such devices include cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, iPads, and portable music and entertainment systems.

From **8:00 AM** until **2:20 PM**, students will not be permitted to use or access their personal internet-enabled electronic devices at school. By 8:00 AM, students must power off their devices and place them in their school lockers until dismissal at 2:20 PM. Please note that, as per the law, students may not use their phones during lunch.

The greatest strength of the HSAS community is the trust that we have in one another. While many schools have decided to collect devices upon entry or lock them in pouches, we have instead opted to trust our students to store their phones and other devices in their own lockers. We hope our students will use this trust well and make every effort to follow this regulation. We will assess the effectiveness of this policy at the end of the first marking period on November 7, 2025, and periodically throughout the year. If, working together, we have been able to abide by the new law, we will continue to implement this policy as written here. If not—if, for example, large numbers of students use their phones throughout the day— we will have no choice but to purchase pouches or find another means of collecting and storing devices.

EXCEPTIONS

- Students are allowed to use their devices prior to 8 AM and after 2:20 PM.
- In case we need to reach you in an emergency, students are allowed to use their devices when taking a Lehman College course.
- Students are allowed to use their device if they have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan that includes use of an internet-enabled device, and they do not have a DOE-issued device for such purpose.
- Parents/guardians must contact their child's guidance counselor or the principal if a student requires an exception for a reason such as: medical monitoring (for example to monitor blood sugar); if student is a caregiver; approved translation purposes (such as interpretation services if no other means are available); in cases of family emergency; or when otherwise required by law. Requests for an exception will be processed and approved within one week. The school may require documentation to substantiate the request.

- In case of illness, the nurse will contact a parent or guardian. The nurse may also give students permission to call or text a parent or guardian on a personal device.
- The principal/designee may authorize usage for an educational purpose.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- From 8:00 AM until 2:20 PM, parents or guardians can call the main office to reach their child in case of emergency. Our phone number is 718-329-2144. Please do not call unless it is truly an emergency.
- In case of an emergency situation at school, students will be granted access to their phones once it is safe to do so. The school will use Jupiter to communicate essential information to parents and guardians.
- Were there to be an emergency on the college campus, please note that HSAS works closely with the Lehman College Department of Public Safety. We have procedures in place to stay in touch with teachers and students and to communicate essential information to keep all of us safe.

COPING STRATEGIES

We recognize that, especially at first, it may be difficult to resist the urge to use your phone or another device. However, numerous studies have shown that excessive usage of phones and other devices can affect your sleep, your mental health, and your ability to focus on and complete work efficiently. Studies have also shown that excessive usage can lead to anxiety, cyberbullying, social isolation, and self-harm. We want to support you and help you adjust to life without your device during the school day.

- If you feel you are struggling to adhere to the new rules, you may voluntarily ask the office to store your phone during the school day.
- We are hoping to purchase ping pong tables and other games and diversions that you may use in the cafeteria during lunch. The student government is also planning to organize lunch-time activities and competitions. If you wish to get some work done, we will provide a quiet classroom in our building, equipped with school laptops or iPads that you may use to access Google Classroom.
- You are welcome to see your counselor or any one of us to discuss how you are feeling.
- The faculty and staff will be doing our best to follow the new rules as well. We are in this together.
- Our hope is that, over time, we will re-learn how to live our lives face-to-face and in the moment. We also hope that, without our devices, we will be more present and engaged in class, listen better to one another, and discover a new kind of social and academic equilibrium.

DISCIPLINE

- Students who use electronic devices in violation of the NYCPS Discipline Code, the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413, and/or the NYCPS Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy ("IAUSP") will be subject to progressive discipline. This means that the disciplinary responses will escalate based on the nature and frequency of the violation.
- If a student is found to be in possession of or using a prohibited device between the hours of 8:00 AM and 2:20 PM:

    - First Offense - The device will be confiscated and stored in the main office. The student may retrieve it at 2:20 PM. An email will be sent to the student's parent or guardian.
    - Second Offense - The device will be confiscated and stored in the main office for the next five school days. Each morning, the student must drop off the device at 8:00 AM and then retrieve it at 2:20 PM. The school will call or email the student's parent or guardian.
    - Third Offense - The device will be confiscated, and the student's parent or guardian must come to school and pick it up. Then, for the next twenty school days (i.e., a month), the student must drop off the device at 8:00 AM and then retrieve it at 2:20 PM.
- Use of an electronic device to engage in scholastic dishonesty, cheating, plagiarism, or unauthorized collaboration will result in disciplinary action consistent with the school's Policy on Academic Honesty and the NYC Discipline Code.
- It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to ensure that students and staff are treated with respect. Therefore, using a cellphone or other electronic device to engage in the harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying of a student or staff member, whether at school or at home, may result in disciplinary action, consistent with the NYC Disciplinary Code.
- As provided in the State law, a student may not be suspended solely on the grounds that the student accessed a personal internet-enabled device in violation of school policy. Repeated incidents of insubordination (i.e. refusal to surrender or store a device) may result in a suspension if approved by the Office of Safety and Youth Development.

LOST OR STOLEN DEVICES

- We are lucky to have a school at which we do not have to worry about the safety of our possessions. Nevertheless, we encourage you to keep your locker LOCKED. Please note that you must use a school-provided lock, rather than your own.
- In the unlikely event that an electronic device is stolen or damaged at school, parents can submit a claim to the Comptroller's Office. More information on submitting a claim is available on the Comptroller's webpage.

A link to the official policy is provided here: CellPolicy.docx

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a focused and productive learning environment. If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Fiore, our parent coordinator, Ms. Cook or Mr. Olivieri, our vice principals, or me, your principal. We can all be reached at 718-329-2144.