

Policy on Student Personal Devices at Benjamin Franklin High School

At Benjamin Franklin High School, we believe that a focused learning environment and a positive school culture are essential for our students' well-being and academic success. To support these goals, we have implemented the **"Off and Away" policy** for personal devices, such as cell phones and smartwatches. This policy aims to minimize distractions in the classroom and reduce the social pressure students often feel to be constantly connected.

Key Principles of "Off and Away"

The "Off and Away" policy is not a ban on personal devices, but a framework for responsible use. It's built on a shared commitment from students, staff, and families to foster a more present and engaged learning community.

- **During Class:** While in class, all personal devices must be **turned off and stored out of sight**. This ensures students can give their full attention to the lesson without the interruption of notifications or alerts.
 - **During Non-Instructional Time:** At the high school level, we understand the need for some flexibility. Students may be permitted to use their devices during free periods, Lunch and Learn, and the time between classes.
 - **Exceptions and Emergencies:** We recognize that there may be specific circumstances where device use is necessary. In a true emergency, students or staff can make exceptions. For parents and guardians who need to contact their child during the school day, please call the main office. Our staff will ensure your student receives the message promptly.
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Why "Off and Away"?

This policy was developed with the physical health and mental well-being of our students as the top priority. Research shows a strong link between constant device use and increased stress levels among young people. By creating a culture where students aren't expected to be instantly available to texts, social media, or group chats, we can help them focus on their learning and social interactions at school.

The success of "Off and Away" depends on our community working together. We encourage families to support this policy by reminding students to keep their devices off and away during class time and to use the main office as the primary point of contact for urgent messages during the school day.