



# Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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**TO:** HOH Families and Staff

**RE:** Distraction-Free Schools Initiative – Hastings

## **Background**

Starting August 1, 2025, a new law in New York State will limit the use of smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices during the school day for all K–12 students. This means that from the first bell to the last, including lunch and study halls, personal devices may not be used unless specifically allowed by the school.<sup>1</sup>

Schools across the state, including ours, are working on plans to securely store devices during the day and to ensure parents have a way to reach their children in case of an emergency. As part of our district's efforts to prepare, we have developed the required Policy ([5695 Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the School Day](#)) and procedures to support this change.

## **Procedures**

While this is a district-wide policy applying to all three schools, the procedures focus on Farragut Middle School and Hastings High School. In accordance with Policy 5695 and NYS law, personal internet-enabled devices are not allowed in any form at Hillside Elementary School.

We will be implementing a pouch system for FMS and HHS students to store their devices throughout the school day. Each FMS and HHS student will be issued a district-owned pouch. We have developed a comprehensive set of [Procedures for Storage of Internet-Enabled Personal Devices](#), which gives detailed instructions on the pouch system, including expectations, requirements and consequences.

It is important to note that, per state law, students will not be permitted to bring to school personal laptops, tablets or computers. These are “internet-enabled devices,” which per the state are not allowed in public schools during the school day. Fortunately, we are able to provide students the required devices for educational purposes—these may be used in school.

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<sup>1</sup> [We announced the new law on May 13, 2025 to staff and families.](#)

## **Upcoming Communications**

By late-August, more communication will follow regarding details on pouch distribution and related issues. At any time, please be in touch with your HES, FMS or HHS building administrators if you have questions specific to your student(s).

We have established a dedicated webpage, [Distraction-Free Schools](#), which will be regularly updated with information and guidance.

## **Final Word**

A big change is upon all of us with this new state law and its requirements for Hastings students, as well as our public school counterparts state-wide. I would ask that we embrace the central purpose of this new law—**which is to help students stay focused, reduce distractions, and support their learning**. To that end, please begin discussions and planning with your students to prepare for device-free schools starting this fall.