

Amani Public Charter School Distraction-Free School Policy

Effective Date: August 1, 2025

Purpose

In alignment with the New York State FY2026 Budget requirement for a distraction-free school environment, Amani Public Charter School is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and focused learning environment. This policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled personal devices during the school day on school grounds, with specific exceptions outlined below.

Policy Statement

Beginning August 1, 2025, students at Amani Public Charter School are **prohibited from using internet-enabled personal devices** (including but not limited to smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, and wireless earbuds) during the instructional day while on school grounds.

Acceptable Use Exceptions

The use of personal internet-enabled devices is permitted **only under the following circumstances**, and must be **authorized by a teacher, school leader, or support staff** where appropriate:

1. **Educational Purposes:** If explicitly approved for a classroom-based instructional activity or project.
2. **Student Health Management:** For students who use devices to manage documented medical conditions (e.g., diabetes monitoring apps).
3. **Emergency Situations:** In the event of a verified emergency, including lockdowns or safety threats.
4. **Translation Services:** For students who require translation or accessibility tools to engage with instruction
5. **IEP or 504 Plan Requirement:** When specified in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.
6. **Caregiver Responsibilities:** When approved on a case-by-case basis by a school psychologist, social worker, or counselor for students who serve as caregivers.

Prohibited Use

Unless under one of the exceptions listed above, students may not:

- Use personal devices for texting, calling, social media, gaming, or streaming content.
- Access personal apps, browse the internet, or take unauthorized photos/videos during the school day.

Parent-Guardian Communication

To ensure families can maintain communication with students during the day:

- **Parent/guardian contact methods include:**
 - Calling the Main Office at 914 668-2553
 - Emailing the student's teacher or designated staff member
 - Emergency messages delivered via the school administrative team

Families will receive a **written notification** of these communication procedures annually and upon enrollment.

On-Site Storage of Devices

Students who bring devices to school must **secure them in their assigned cell phone storage locker** or turn them in at the main office at the start of the day. The school is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices.

Enforcement & Disciplinary Action

- School staff will address violations through **restorative, non-punitive measures** whenever possible.
- **Suspension will not be issued solely for a violation of this policy**
- Staff will follow consistent, developmentally appropriate responses to violations, including:
 - Verbal reminders
 - Confiscation with same-day return
 - Parent contact or meeting
 - Restorative reflection or agreement

Amani Public Charter School is committed to **ensuring fair and equitable enforcement** of this policy across all student groups.

- An **annual report** will be published by **September 1, 2026**, and each year thereafter, detailing:
 - The number of policy violations
 - Demographics associated with enforcement
 - Steps taken to address any statistically significant disparities

Policy Review and Publication

This policy will be:

- Posted on the school website at www.amanicharter.org
- Reviewed annually in August
- Submitted to NYSED through the SEDMON portal by August 1, 2025
- Updated based on stakeholder feedback, changes in law, or school needs