

Policy 5695 STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

(X) Required

() Local

(X) Notice

The district prohibits student use of personal electronic devices during the school day¹ or on school grounds² unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504) or as permitted below. The district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Personal electronic devices include:

- **Internet-enabled devices** that are capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications; such devices include smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, blue-tooth-connected headphones/earbuds, etc.; and
- **Non-internet-enabled devices** that are *not capable* of connecting to the internet and do not enable the user to access content on the internet; such devices may include fitness trackers, wired or wireless headphones and earbuds, e-readers, voice recorders, and music devices.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

During the school day, parents/guardians may contact their children via the following methods:

1. Calling the school office;
2. Emailing the school office;
3. Emailing their children at their district-assigned email address for access on their district-issued device (only for students in grades 6-12).

The district will notify parents in writing of the communication options at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

Device Access and Storage

Students are encouraged not to bring personal electronic devices to school. If students do bring such devices to school, they must be stored for the entire school day in the student's hallway locker or in the student's classroom cubby at the elementary level if lockers are not available. Devices must be silenced and not used during the school day unless permission is granted by the administration.

¹ "School Day" means the entirety of the instructional day during all instructional time and non-instructional time, including but not limited to zero period, pre-first period, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

² "Schools grounds" are defined as school buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, or school property in general.

Exceptions for Specific Purposes

Use of personal electronic devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or where required by law.

Students may be permitted to use their personal electronic devices during the school day on school grounds for specific educational purposes if the following criteria are met:

- With the approval of the superintendent, the building principal has authorized the use of personal electronic devices (e.g., laptop computers) for specific academic classes or co-curricular clubs;
- The student has registered the device with the district in accordance with district procedures; and
- The student uses the device to access the internet or authorized applications through the district's network, under the terms of Policy 4526: Computer Use in Instruction.

On occasion, the district permits the use of personal electronic devices in the event of an emergency as determined by an administrator, and under the following circumstances:

1. Where necessary to manage a student's health care (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.);
2. For translation services; and/or
3. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon the written recommendation of a district school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, and the approval of a district administrator).

Parents/guardians may request an exception for their children to use personal electronic devices during the school day as listed above. Written requests must be made to the building principal and must include documentation from an appropriate health-care professional for health-care exceptions.

For students who have explicit permission from an administrator to have a personal electronic device on campus as permitted above, specific instructions will be provided on where and how to store the device(s).

Enforcement, Consequences and Reporting

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of building administrative staff, but all employees are expected to assist in enforcement. Students will be reminded of this policy regularly and consistently, especially at the start of the school year and after returning from breaks.

Administrators will confiscate personal electronic devices that are not stored in accordance with this policy, unless otherwise permitted as detailed herein. The district may not impose suspension from school if the sole ground for the suspension is that the student accessed a personal electronic device as prohibited by this policy. The district may, however, impose consequences for associated prohibited behavior under the

district's Code of Conduct up to and including detention, in-school suspension, and exclusion from extracurricular activities. Alternatively, the district may refer students to district counseling staff and/or assign homework on the detrimental impact of social media on mental health, smartphones in school, or other relevant topics.

Some uses of personal electronic devices may constitute a violation of the law. The district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

When students violate this policy, administrators will discuss with the students and their parents/guardians:

- the aims of this policy;
- the benefits of a distraction-free environment;
- the reasons students did not follow this policy; and
- how the district can help the student contribute to a distraction-free environment.

The superintendent is directed to develop regulations for the implementation of this policy, including specific consequences for students who violate the policy.

Electronic Devices and Testing

Students with IEPs, 504 plans, or documentation from a medical practitioner that specifically requires the use of a personal electronic device may do so as specified, pending verification from the director of school health services (medical director) if necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Parents/Guardians are expected to:
 - a. review and understand this policy;
 - b. review this policy with their children and support the actions of the school and district if their children violate the policy; and
 - c. sign the district's *Personal Electronic Device Agreement*.
2. School administrators are expected to:
 - a. review this policy with faculty and staff;
 - b. remind parents to follow the communications options established in this policy;
 - c. enforce this policy consistently in their buildings;
 - d. provide feedback to the superintendent on the effectiveness of the policy; and
 - e. provide data to the superintendent to include in the year-end reporting. (See below.)
3. Faculty and Staff are expected to:
 - a. explain the purpose and expectations of the policy to students in the context of a distraction-free teaching and learning environment;
 - b. assist in the enforcement of this policy;
 - c. provide instruction when appropriate on how using technology affects learning outcomes; and
 - d. adhere to Policy 9180: *Staff Use of Personal Electronic Devices for Work-Related Duties*.
4. Students are expected to:

- a. follow the rules established under this policy.

Annual Reporting

Beginning September 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the district will publish an annual report on its website detailing the enforcement of this policy over the past year, including non-identifiable demographic information of students who have faced any disciplinary action or intervention for non-compliance with this policy, and an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a plan to mitigate such disparate enforcement.

Policy Distribution and Translation

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on its website. Upon request by a student or parent/guardian, the district will translate this policy into any of the twelve most common non-English languages spoken by Limited-English proficient individuals in the state, as identified by the most recent American Community Survey published by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The district will also include this information, or a plain language summary, in student/family handbooks.

Cross-ref: 4526, Computer Use in Instruction
4526.1, Internet Safety
5300, Code of Conduct
9180, *Staff Use of Personal Electronic Devices for Work-Related Duties*

Ref: Education Law §2803
Price v. New York City Board of Education, 51 A.D.3d 277, lv. to appeal denied, 11 N.Y.3d 702 (2008) (District may ban possession of cell phones on school property)
NYSED, *Prohibition of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in New York State Assessments*, www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments

Adoption date: July 28, 2025

Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District