



The Use of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day

*Dobbs Ferry Board of Education
Policy Committee*

July 28, 2025

“Personal Electronic Devices”

✓ Includes:

- *Internet-enabled devices*
- *Non-internet-enabled devices*

✓ When:

- *From “bell-to-bell”*
- **may include school-related activities outside of school day*

✓ Where:

- *On school grounds*
- **may include school-related activities off school grounds*

Education Law Section 2803

Use of internet-enabled devices during the school day

What the law says:

- ✓ Students are prohibited from using internet-enabled devices on school grounds including hallways, playgrounds, and cafeterias during the school day.
- ✓ There are certain policy requirements schools must adopt including:
 - *Ways for parents/guardians to contact their children during the school day*
 - *Device storage methods*
 - *The stakeholders with whom the district should consult*
 - *Ways to discipline students (no out-of-school suspensions)*
 - *Yearly reporting of disciplinary action for non-compliance including an analysis of demographic disparities in enforcement*

Education Law Section 2803

Use of internet-enabled devices during the school day

What the law does NOT say:

- ✓ The required methods for parent/guardian communication with their children during the school day
- ✓ How personal devices must be stored
- ✓ The specific way that schools need to enforce this law (discipline)

Policy Requirements

1. **Adoption:** By August 1, 2025, each school district must adopt a written policy prohibiting the use of internet-enabled devices by students during the school day anywhere on school grounds.
 - ✓ The Policy Committee offered its revised draft of Policy 5695 for first reading during the meeting of the board on June 24, 2005.
 - ✓ Based on board discussion on June 24, 2025, public comment and stakeholder feedback, the Policy Committee made the necessary edits to the draft policy that will be presented for a second reading on July 28, 2025.

Policy Requirements

2. **Student Contact:** The district must provide parents/guardians with one or more methods to contact their child during the school day.

✓ **The Policy Committee recommends the following communication methods:**

- *Call or email the school office*
- *For grades 6-12, email your children directly at their school-issued email addresses (to be read on their school-issued electronic devices)*

Policy Requirements

3. **Consultation:** The district must consult local stakeholders, including the employee organization representing each bargaining unit within the school building, parents/guardians, and students, in the development of the policy and prior to its adoption.

✓ Stakeholder engagement

- *MS student government*
- *HS student government*
- *Employee Organizations: DFAA, DFUT, CSEA*
- *PTSA*
- *Rivertown Superintendents Collaborative*
- *Heads Up*
- *Public comment through the district website*

Policy Requirements

4. **Device Storage:** If phones are allowed to be brought to school, the district must provide one or more methods for on-site storage where students may store their internet-enabled devices during the school day. This can include student lockers.

✓ **The Policy Committee considered:**

- *A complete ban on personal electronic devices*
- *Lockers with locks*
- *Phone-holders in first period classes*
- *Lockable phone cabinets*
- *Personal pouches*

✓ **The Policy Committee did NOT consider:**

- *Student backpacks*

Policy Requirements

4. **Device Storage:** If phones are allowed to be brought to school, the district must provide one or more methods for on-site storage where students may store their internet-enabled devices during the school day. This can include student lockers.

✓ **The Policy Committee is recommending:**

- *Lockers with locks (the district will provide locks for high school lockers)*

Policy Requirements

5. **Discipline:** A district may not suspend a student *if the sole grounds* for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device in violation of the adopted policy.
- ✓ **The Policy Committee is recommending that:**
- *Administrators confiscate personal electronic devices that are being used without approval and/or are not stored according to the policy*
 - *All district employees are expected to assist with enforcement*
- ✓ **Further discipline may include:**
- *Detention*
 - *In school suspension*
 - *Exclusion from extracurricular activities*
 - *Counseling*
 - *Assigning homework on the connection between smartphone use, social media, and mental health*

Exceptions

Student use of a personal electronic device **must** be authorized if explicitly included in the student's **individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan.**

Student use of a personal electronic device **may** be authorized:

- ✓ by an **administrator** for a **specific educational purpose**;
- ✓ where necessary for the management of a **student's healthcare**;
- ✓ in the event of an **emergency** as determined by the principal or district administration;
- ✓ for **translation services**;
- ✓ for a student who is routinely **responsible for the care** and wellbeing of a family member;
- ✓ or where required by law.

Next Steps

When the board adopts the policy, administration will:

- ✓ post the policy to the district website and complete NYSED reporting requirements;
- ✓ share the adopted policy with students, faculty and staff, and parents/guardians;
- ✓ develop regulations to guide the implementation of the policy; and
- ✓ share the regulations with students, faculty and staff, and parents/guardians prior to September 3.

When the board adopts the policy, the policy committee will:

- ✓ create an FAQ based on the feedback we received from community members; and
- ✓ direct the superintendent to post the FAQ and other related parent/guardian resources to the district website.