

## **STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The Board of Education recognizes that students may have personal electronic devices that can perform different functions. Such devices include “internet-enabled devices” and are broadly defined as: any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, or any other device capable of directly connecting to the internet (via Wi-Fi or cellular connection) and enabling the user to access content on the internet (including specialized applications such as social media networks and artificial intelligence models) but do not include any such device supplied by the district for educational purposes.

Other personal electronic devices include those capable of indirectly connecting to the internet via tethering and accessing content on the internet include but are not limited to smart wearables (fitness trackers, glasses, lapel pins, rings, wired or wireless headphones and earbuds, home assistant speaker, etc.), e-readers, calculators, voice recorders, cameras, and music devices.

All categories of these personal internet-capable devices can create significant and widespread distractions to the school environment, negatively impact student mental health, contribute to disciplinary infractions, and reduce student engagement/attention. Additionally, in an emergency, the use of personal electronic devices can distract students from following the directions of staff or emergency responders, contribute to the spread of misinformation, create congestion in the emergency response system, and interfere with the district’s emergency response protocols.

The district is not responsible for stolen, lost, or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

### **Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation**

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents and guardians may contact their children via the following methods: calling each school’s main office or sending an email to the district-provided email address for each school. Students may contact their parents by using the telephone located in the school’s main office. The district will notify parents in writing of the communication protocol at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

## Device Access and Storage

As required by Education Law §2803, this policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time) on school grounds (any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school or district or BOCES facility), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below).

1. At the elementary school level, students are discouraged from bringing devices to school at all. Any device that is brought to school must be turned off and stored in backpacks and placed in the back of the classroom storage area for the entire school day.
2. At the middle school level, student devices must be turned off before entry into school and stored in student lockers for the entire school day.
3. At the high school level, student devices must be turned off before entry into school and stored in student lockers or other school approved cell phone specific locker storage for the entire school day.

Level	Rule	Consequence
K-5	Any personal non-District-issued device capable of directly or indirectly connecting to the internet (i.e., phones, tablets, watches, etc.) must be turned off and stored safely in backpacks and placed in the back of the classroom storage area for the entire school day.  Students are not permitted to use technology on the bus.	First offense, device is confiscated, and is returned to the student at the end of the day.  Second offense, device is confiscated, and the parent will pick it up from school.
6-8	Any personal non-District-issued device capable of directly or indirectly connecting to the internet (i.e., phones, tablets, watches, etc.) must be turned off and stored in lockers for the entire school day.	First offense, device is confiscated, and is returned to the student at the end of the day.  Second offense, device is confiscated, and the parent will pick it up from school.
9-12	Any personal non-District-issued device capable of directly or indirectly connecting to the internet (i.e., phones, tablets, watches, etc.) must be turned off before entry into school and stored in student lockers or other school approved cell phone specific locker storage for the entire school day.	First offense, device is confiscated, and is returned to the student at the end of the day.  Second offense, device is confiscated, and the parent will pick it up from school.

## **Exceptions for Specific Purposes**

Use of internet-enabled devices must be permitted where included in a student's Individualized Education Program, Section 504 plan, or where required by law. Additionally, the district permits the use of internet-enabled devices in the event of an emergency, and under the following circumstances with the proper documentation:

1. Where necessary to manage a student's healthcare (e.g., diabetes, asthma, medication, etc.)
2. For translation services, and/or
3. For students who are routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member (on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor)

Parents must request an exception for their children to use internet-enabled devices during the school day as listed above. Requests must be made to the Building Principal, and for healthcare exceptions, must include documentation from an appropriate healthcare professional.

## **Personal Devices in Lieu of District-Issued Devices (B.Y.O.D.)**

As per Education Law §2803, if authorized by a teacher, principal, and the school district, charter school, or board of cooperative educational services for a specific educational purpose, students may use a personal computer (e.g., MacBook, other Notebook Computer, or iPad) in lieu of their district-issued device at North Shore High School only.

High School students only may be permitted to use their internet-enabled computing device (i.e., laptop) in lieu of their district-issued computing device (i.e. Chromebook) during the school day on school grounds in academic classes and classrooms (including classrooms and the library) for specific educational purposes (e.g. studying, conducting research, completing work) at the high school level (BYOD), only if all of the following criteria are met:

- The student has registered the BYOD device with the district's Technology Department, in accordance with district procedures.
- The student agrees to only connect the BYOD device to a specific "BYOD" network which will only provide filtered external internet access (no internal network access is granted to unmanaged personal devices).

- The teacher has authorized the use of specific devices for a particular activity, after which the device must be stowed per this policy. This privilege is prioritized for high school juniors and seniors.
- The student agrees to have all internet access bound by the district's federally mandated use of an internet filter and to not use proxies, VPN's hotspots, etc. to circumvent these protections in schools.
- The student uses the BYOD device during school hours and on school grounds under all terms of policy 4526, Computer Use in Instruction.
- The student and parent/guardian must agree to covenant and to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the North Shore Central School District, its agents and employees from and against **any and all** liability, loss, damages, claims, or actions (including costs and attorney fees) for personal injury, property damage, or loss, to the extent permissible by law, arising out of or in connection with the use of personal electronic equipment on school grounds or at school-sanctioned events.

Under any of these exceptions, devices may only be used for the purposes outlined in the exception, and the device must be silenced and put away when not in use, to the extent compatible with the reason for the exception.

### **Enforcement, Consequences, and Reporting**

Enforcement of this policy is chiefly the responsibility of the building administrative staff; however, designated 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.

For students out of compliance with this policy, the device will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. The first time this happens, the student may retrieve the device, and the parent will be notified. For subsequent instances, the parent must appear in person to retrieve the device. Further instances will result in the device being held in the school office daily for longer periods. The district will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of devices that are held by the district but cannot guarantee that the devices will be secure. For students with exceptions under this policy, the district will examine alternative ways to achieve the purpose of the exception, including different storage or access provisions, on a case-by-case basis.

Administrators will also discuss the aims of this policy with students and their parents, the benefits of a distraction-free environment, the reasons the student had difficulty following this policy, and how the district can help the student contribute to a distraction-free environment.

The district may not impose suspension from school if the sole ground for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device as prohibited by this policy. However, the district may utilize consequences under the district's Code of Conduct, including detention, in-school suspension, and exclusion from extracurricular activities. The district may also utilize assignments 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 school district Code of Conduct or other district policies, and in some instances, the law. The district will cooperate with law enforcement officials as appropriate.

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 disciplinary action for non-compliance with this policy, and an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a plan to mitigate such disparate enforcement.

### **Electronic Devices and Testing**

To ensure the integrity of testing, in accordance with state guidelines, students may not bring any personal internet-capable devices into classrooms or other exam locations during any local or state assessment, including BYOD computing devices such as personal laptops or tablets. All students must use a district-issued device that is specifically configured/controlled for the purpose of ensuring a secure administration of a local or state assessment.

Test proctors, monitors, and school officials have the right to collect cell phones and other prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test and to hold them for the duration of the test-taking time. Admission to the test will be prohibited to any student who has any personal internet-capable device in their possession and does not relinquish it.

Students with Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 Plans, or documentation from medical practitioners specifically requiring use of electronic devices may do so as specified.

### **Policy Distribution, Translation and Education**

As required by law, the district will post this policy in a visible and accessible location on its website. Upon request by a student or parent, 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.

In addition, the District and each school will continue to educate families and students about the rationale behind personal device restrictions in the context of health and well-being.

Cross-ref: 4526, Computer Use in Instruction  
4526.1, Internet Safety  
5300, Code of Conduct

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](http://www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments)

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