

The Use of Personal Electronic Devices During the School Day

Dobbs Ferry Board of Education Policy Committee

June 24, 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 <u>NOT</u> 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)



- **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 offers 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 <u>will revise the</u> <u>draft policy as needed.</u>



- **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)



- **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



- 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 <u>NOT</u> consider:
 - Student backpacks



- **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:
 - A complete ban on personal electronic devices
 - Lockers with locks (the district will provide locks for high school lockers)



- **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 <u>must</u> be authorized if explicitly included in the student's <u>individualized education program</u> <u>(IEP) or 504 plan</u>.

Student use of a personal electronic device <u>may</u> be authorized:

- ✓ by an <u>administrator</u> 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.



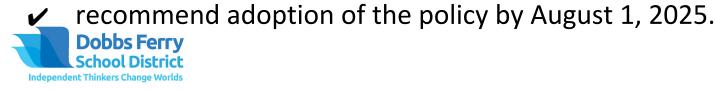
Next Steps

If the board does <u>NOT</u> support the draft policy on June 24 and requests substantive changes, the <u>policy committee</u> will:

 present a revised first reading to the board at an upcoming meeting;

If the board <u>supports</u> the draft policy on June 24 without substantive changes, the <u>policy committee</u> and/or <u>administration</u> will:

- ✓ post the draft policy to the district website on June 25 and invite public comment;
- ✓ share public comments with the policy committee for consideration;
- present a second reading of the proposed policy to the full board; and



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Next Steps

Once the policy is adopted by the board, <u>administration</u> will:

- ✓ post the policy to the district website;
- 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.

