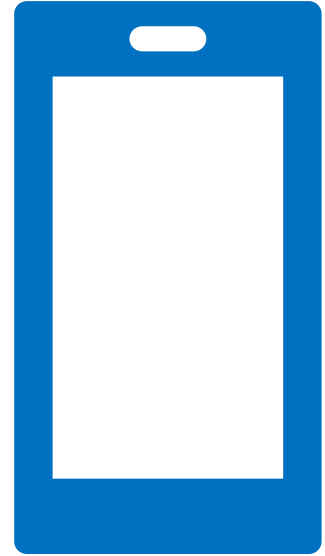


VSCHSD Cell Phone & Device Policy

August 6, 2025

Supporting Students and
Families During This
Change



What's Changing in NYS?

- NYS Education Law 2803 bans student use of internet-enabled devices during the instructional day.
- Applies to all public schools, charter schools, and BOCES.
- Schools must report annually on enforcement.
- VSCHSD adopted Policy 5695 in July 2025.

Rationale for Change

1. Reducing Distractions

The law aims to eliminate the use of smartphones, smartwatches, and other internet-enabled devices that can disrupt learning. By removing these distractions, students can better focus on instruction and classroom engagement.

2. Promoting Equity

All students will use school-issued devices for educational purposes, ensuring consistent access to learning tools and minimizing disparities caused by personal device differences.

3. Protecting Student Well-being

The policy reflects growing concerns about the impact of excessive screen time and social media on student mental health. By limiting device use during the school day, the law supports healthier habits and interpersonal interactions.

4. Clarifying Boundaries

The ban applies to all areas on school grounds—including hallways, cafeterias, bathrooms, and classrooms—from the start of 1st period (7:50 AM) through the end of ninth period (2:43 PM). This creates a clear and consistent expectation for students and staff.

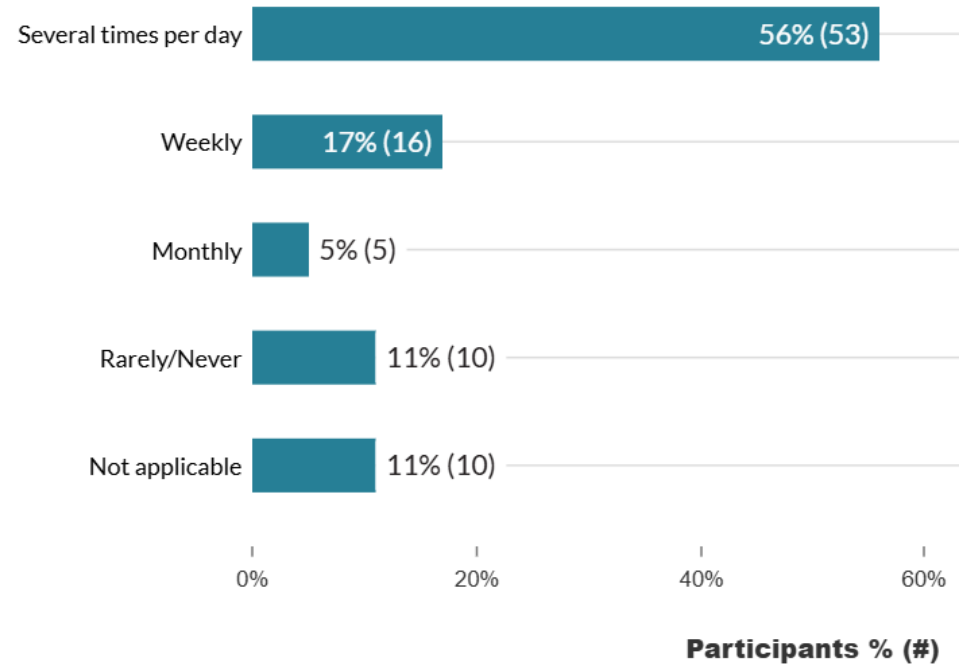
5. Ensuring Accountability

Schools are required to report annually on enforcement, making the policy transparent and measurable. This encourages districts to implement fair and consistent disciplinary procedures.

Teacher Survey

4 | How often do you have to address cell phone

answered: 94
not answered: 27 ?





Which Devices Are Affected?

- All internet enabled devices, including smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, AirPods, and any personal device capable of internet access.
- School-issued devices for instruction are allowed.
- Non-internet-enabled devices are allowed.



When & Where the Ban Applies

- Ban is in effect beginning the first day of school, from 7:50 AM to 2:43 PM.
- Applies to all areas on school grounds including classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, gym, library, entrance, and bathrooms.
- Phones may be used off-campus during free periods but must be stored again upon return.
- Students may not use the phones in the hallways when entering or returning.



Storage

- Devices must be stored in student lockers.
- Lockers are accessed via student ID and are unique to each student.
- Students may not carry phones during the day.

Exceptions to the Policy

Students with IEPs or 504 plans that specify device use are permitted to maintain their phones based on the language of the plan.

School-issued devices are used for learning.

Communication During the Day

- Students can use the main office phone to contact families during free/lunch periods.
- Parents/guardians should call the main office to reach students.
- Messages will be delivered, or students will be called down as needed.

Main office contacts:

Central HS: 516-561-4400

Memorial JHS: 516-872-7710

North HS: 516-564-5500

South HS: 516-791-0310



Implementation



A cooperative, supportive approach



Students put phones away before entering school and store them in lockers



School administrators and security aides present in hallways and throughout school



Teachers focusing on teaching – students focusing on learning



Communication with all shareholders:

Assemblies for students

Zoom meetings for families by each school administration

Communication from district

Disciplinary Consequences

- If students are found with their phones during school hours (7:50-2:43), phones will be confiscated and consequences issued:
- Progressive discipline model
 - 1st: Confiscated, student retrieves
 - 2nd: Confiscated, parent/guardian retrieves
- Refusal to comply = additional consequences
- We DO NOT want to have conflict with students – we are asking for adherence to rules and cooperation.



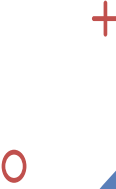
**CELL PHONE
BAN**

Confiscation Procedures

In class: Teacher directs student to place phone in bag, fill out form. Teachers submit referral and contact home.

In hallway: Staff requests name/grade, notifies AP. Admin/security collects and stores phones in main office safe.

Phones stored in main office safe, retrieved at end of school day.



Supporting the Transition

- School specific Zoom meetings:
 - Central HS: Wednesday, August 20 at 6 pm
 - Memorial JHS: Tuesday, August 19 at 7 pm
 - North HS: Tuesday, August 19 at 6:30 pm
 - South HS: Monday, August 18 at 6 pm
 - Restorative processing circles
 - Lessons on digital wellness
 - Staff training on enforcement and communication
 - Family workshops and resources
 - Student voice opportunities
- 

Parent Concerns

Side A

Restrict Phone Usage

Many responses advocate for a stricter approach to limiting phone usage during school hours. This category emphasizes the idea that electronic devices can be a significant distraction in school environments, thus advocating for policies that limit student access to them during instructional periods. Proponents argue that previous generations have successfully navigated school without phones, suggesting that students today can do the same. There is a strong belief that focusing on device-free time will enhance the ability of students to concentrate on their studies and face-to-face interactions.

Common ground

Emergency Communication

Emergency communication is identified as a common ground between the differing perspectives on phone usage. Both categories recognize the necessity of having reliable communication channels available during emergencies. Schools might implement systems or policies that ensure quick and effective parent-child communication, whether through the main office, designated phone periods, or technology that limits distraction but allows essential contact. This shared concern underlines the importance of addressing safety and communication in any policy adjustment.

Side B

Allow Phone Access

Conversely, some responses support the notion of allowing students to have phone access at specified times or under certain conditions for communication purposes. This group is primarily concerned with areas such as safety and ease of parent-child communication, especially during emergencies. They suggest options like providing access during lunch periods, storing phones safely in lockers, or having alternative communication means such as smart watches or educational platforms. While acknowledging that phones can be a distraction, they argue that responsible use can coexist with school policies.

Top Themes

Emergency Contact

Device Management

Communication Alternatives

Student Involvement

Anxiety & Discomfort

Survey Feedback

- **Emergency Communication & Safety:**
 - Main office phone for two-way communication
 - Parent Square utilized for emergency and mass notification – make sure your contact information is correct in Infinite Campus
- **Mental Health & Emotional Security:**
 - Documented 504 Plan/IEP indicating how phone is necessary to address this need
- **Ban is Unfair:**
 - It is state law and policy. We do not have a choice in implementation.
- **Policy Implementation & Clarity**
 - Messages will be delivered to students in a timely fashion.
 - Exceptions do exist (e.g., for students with IEPs or 504 plans).
- **Lunch & Non-Instructional Time**
 - Phones are NOT permitted to be used in school, even during non-instructional time. Student laptops are available for use during lunch, study hall, free periods.

Survey Feedback

Communication Protocols

If you need to reach your child during school hours for an emergency, please call the school's main office.

- **Central HS:** 516-561-4400
- **North HS:** 516-564-5501
- **Memorial JHS:** 516-872-7710
- **South HS:** 516-791-0310

Messages will be delivered promptly, and students will be called down if needed. For non-emergency matters, please wait until dismissal when students retrieve their phones from their lockers.

.

Security & Storage

- Lockers are student specific, safe and accessible.
- If IDs are lost or stolen, students report immediately to the main office.

Supportive Rollout

- **Clear communication:** First day of school assemblies with students, consistent communication with families, staff support
- **Student involvement:** Inform students, process the change in class discussions, support partnership.
- **Staff modeling:** Staff will follow the same expectations to model consistency.
- **Alternative engagement:** Games and social activities during lunch to replace phone time.
- **Transparency:** Share rollout information with community as year progresses, ask for feedback.



Valley Stream Central High School District