



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Student Cell Phone & Electronic Device Policy

Q1: Why did the district adopt this policy?

The Bethlehem Area School District adopted this policy to promote a more focused, respectful, and engaging learning environment. The widespread use of cell phones during the school day has contributed to distractions in classrooms, social-emotional challenges, academic integrity concerns, and safety issues. This policy sets clear boundaries on when and where personal electronic devices may be used, so that our schools remain safe and supportive learning spaces for all students.

Q2: How will expectations be communicated to students?

Teachers will review classroom procedures, and administrators will review building procedures during the beginning of school exercises.

Q3: Are students banned from bringing their phones to school?

No. Students are allowed to bring personal electronic devices, including cell phones, to school. In grades K-8, personal electronic device use is prohibited during school hours. In High School, personal electronic device use is restricted to non-instructional time. Devices must be silent and away unless specifically authorized for instructional or emergency purposes.

Q4: Can students use their phones before or after school?

Yes. Students may use their electronic devices before the start of the school day while waiting to enter the building and after dismissal when leaving the building to head home, as long as their use does not disrupt the school environment or pose a safety concern.

Q5: Can students use their phones during lunch or in hallways?

In grades K-8, phones and personal electronic devices may not be used during lunch or in hallways during the school day. In High School, students are permitted to use their personal electronic devices in the hallway or cafeteria during non-instructional time. Consistent expectations are maintained across classrooms and common areas to ensure equity and minimize distractions.

Q6: What if a student needs to use their phone to contact a parent or guardian?

Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day should seek permission from a staff member to visit the main office or student service center. Staff are available to support communication needs that arise during school hours.

Q7: How can a parent or guardian contact their child in an emergency during the school day?

You can call the school, and someone will assist you.

Q8: Are there exceptions for medical or emergency use?

Yes. Students with documented medical, behavioral, or disability-related needs—outlined in an IEP, 504 Plan, or Individual Health Plan—may use devices as specified in those plans.

Additional exceptions may be approved in advance by school administrators for emergencies, school-sponsored events, or specific instructional purposes.

Q9: What happens if a student uses their phone in violation of the policy?

Schools will have a tiered approach system when handling violations of the personal electronic device policy, which can be found on the school website. If a student uses an electronic device in violation of the policy, they will first be directed to put the electronic device away by a staff member, and if it is out a second time, then staff are authorized to call the office to have it confiscated. All instances of confiscation will prompt a restorative conversation with an administrator and a call home to ensure expectations are understood. The device will be held in the main office or student service center and may require a parent or guardian to pick it up.

Additional disciplinary actions may be taken based on the nature and frequency of the violation and/or response to intervention, consistent with our district's Framework for Citizenship.

Q10: Is the district responsible for lost or stolen devices?

No. Students who choose to bring personal devices to school are fully responsible for their safekeeping. The district is not liable for any loss, theft, or damage, including situations where a device is confiscated for policy violations.

Q11: Can teachers allow students to use personal devices for learning activities?

Yes, but only if approved in advance by the building principal and aligned with instructional goals. In general, instruction will rely on district-issued devices and technology tools that ensure equity for all students.

Q12: Does this policy apply during extracurricular activities or school events?

Yes. The building administration may restrict or permit personal electronic device use during after-school extracurricular activities and/or school-sponsored activities at its discretion.

Restrictions may vary depending on the nature of the event, and students are expected to follow staff directions at all time.

