

# LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Cell-Phone Free Instructional Day Secondary Guidance Effective January 6, 2025

### Why Implement a Cell Phone-Free Instructional Day?

**Improved Academic Focus:** Reducing the distraction of cell phones to prioritize instruction in the classroom helps students stay focused, improving academic performance.

**Social-Emotional Learning:** Encourages face-to-face interactions, helping students develop strong communication skills.

**Mental Health Benefits:** Less screen time reduces stress, anxiety, and the negative effects of social media.

**Minimizing Disruptions:** Phones are a major source of distraction in the classroom. Keeping phones stored supports a better learning environment.

### The Expectation for Students:

**Phones must be turned off** and stored out of sight during instructional hours.

Phones should **not be seen, heard, or used** during school instructional hours.

**Exceptions for Middle & High School:** Phones may be used before and after school, and during designated times, such as lunch or specific breaks.

### Research Regarding Distraction & Academic Performance that Supports the Policy:

**72% of U.S. high school teachers report cell phones as a significant classroom distraction** (Pew Research Center).

College students who use cellphones during class score lower on tests than those who don't. (Computers in Human Behavior, ERIC)

**Impact on Learning:** Rutgers University found that students using devices during lectures scored lower on exams compared to those who didn't. (Rutgers University)

**Mental Health:** Excessive use of smartphones is linked to increased anxiety and depression (Financial Times, Surgeon General).



### Designated Phone Access Times

#### High School:

**Extended Passing Period & Lunch:** Students may use phones during these breaks.

**Administrative Discretion:** Principals will decide when phones may be used (e.g., during field trips, assemblies).

#### Middle School:

**Lunch Break:** Phones may be used during this time, as determined by the principal.

**Administrative Discretion:** As above, principals will determine appropriate times for phone use.

**Contact Us for Feedback and Questions: Share your experiences and thoughts on this policy.**

For more information, please visit our website or contact the school office.

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### Supporting the Initiative:

#### Guidelines for Responsible Phone Use:

**Mindful Usage:** Use phones responsibly, avoiding excessive screen time.

**Respectful Behavior:** Be considerate of those around you during breaks.

**Digital Citizenship:** Prioritize online safety and kindness.

#### How Can Parents Support This Policy?

**Reinforce the Value of Focus:** Encourage students to minimize distractions during learning time.

**Model Phone-Free Time:** Practice phone-free family time to help students adjust.

**Encourage Responsible Phone Use:** Emphasize the importance of using phones appropriately and responsibly.

#### Expected Outcomes:

**Improved Academic Performance:** Focused students are likely to perform better in their studies.

**Enhanced Social Skills:** Less screen time increases face-to-face interactions and relationship-building.

**Better Mental Health:** Limiting phone use can help reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: Why not implement a total ban on phones?** A complete ban may limit students' ability to use phones for safety before and after school. The policy seeks a balance.

**Q: What does "Not on, not seen, not heard" mean?** Phones should be off, out of sight, and silent during school hours. Visible or audible phones are a violation.

**Q: Will there be exceptions to this policy?** Yes, exceptions will occur for emergency and documented medical or other needs as appropriate.

**Q: How will the school handle non-compliance?** Lawrence Public Schools requires a cell-phone-free instructional environment. During the early weeks of implementation, everyone will continue to educate, reteach, reinforce, and redirect as needed to successfully achieve systemic change. As always, when needed, school teams will engage support from the family and school support team to achieve the expected outcome of a cell-phone-free classroom.



#### Alternatives for Communication & Technology:

**In Case of Emergencies:** Parents can contact the school office to reach students.

**School Phones:** Available for student use if needed to contact family members during the school day.

#### Away For The Day:

<https://www.awayfortheday.org/>

Learn more about the Away for the Day initiative to help transform schools into cell phone-free spaces.

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