BLOOMFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION - BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY MEETING

Board of Education Policy Meeting AT Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Bloomfield Board of Education 1133 Blue Hills Avenue Board Room, 1133 Blue Hills Avenue , Bloomfield, CT 06002

1. Establishment of a Quorum and Call to Order
   F. Bogle-Assegai
2. Consent Agenda
   A. Approval of Minutes - Policy Committee Meeting - May 26, 2026 — 2
      F. Bogle-Assegai
3. Old Business
   A. Policies for a Second Reading
      T. Youngberg
      1. Transportation - 3541 — 3
         T. Youngberg
4. New Business
   T. Youngberg
   A. CT State Department of Education Position Statement on Cell Phone Use in Schools and Review of CABE Policy Personal Technology Use in Schools - 5131.81 — 11
      T. Youngberg
   B. Policies for an Initial Reading
      1. The Nest Lottery Process - 5112.1 — 37
         L. Lamenzo
5. Adjournment
   F. Bogle-Assegai

Board of Education Policy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 7:00 p.m.
Bloomfield Board of Education, Board Room
1133 Blue Hills Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

ATTENDANCE:	F. Bogle-Assegai, Chair	Absent
	L. Easmon	Present
	C. Jones	Absent

ALSO PRESENT:	K. Dunbar	T. Mack-Mohammed	H. Frydman
	T. Youngberg	G. Martinez	

1. **Establishment of a Quorum and Call to Order**
   There was no quorum present so the Policy Committee meeting was canceled at 7:11 p.m.

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F. Bogle-Assegai, Chair

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 3541(a)**

RE: Transportation - Students

Adopted: 11/12/2002
Revised: 10/6/2015
Revised:

Statement of Policy

The Board of Education will provide transportation for students under provisions of state law and regulations. In determining the provision of transportation, the superintendent of schools shall consider the guidelines contained in this policy and shall administer the operation so as to:

1. provide for the safety of students.
2. supplement and reinforce desirable student behavior patterns.
3. assist disabled students appropriately.
4. enrich the instructional program through carefully planned field trips as recommended by the staff.

Definitions

1. "**School transportation**" means the procedure, program, or implemented plan by which a pupil is transported to and/or from school from his/her residence or the bus stop at public expense, whether by use of publicly owned equipment or by contract. Such transportation shall be over public roads approved by the municipality or private roads approved pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-220c.
2. "**Walking distance**" means the linear measure of a prescribed or authorized pedestrian route between the pupil's residence and his/her school from a point at the curb or edge of a public or private road nearest the pupil's residence to a point at the entrance of the school, or a safe entrance to the school grounds located within one hundred feet of the school building entrance or the bus pick-up area, or the route from the point on the public thoroughfare nearest the residence to the school bus or vehicle embarkation point established by the Bloomfield Board of Education.
3. "**One mile walking distance**" means a reasonable measurement of a route to be traversed extending from the point of measurement at least 5,280 feet, but not more than 5,380 feet. regulations designed to effectively and respectfully address family responsibility for unpaid meals.
4. "**Grade K**" means kindergarten, or a school program appropriate to a beginning pupil.
5. "**Hazard**" means a thing or condition, as prescribed in this policy under "Hazardous Conditions" that affects the safety of pupils walking to and from school and/or a designated bus pick-up area.

Definitions (continued)

6. "**Sidewalk**" means a portion of the landscape right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area or fencing; apart from and independent of any white line safety markings along the street pavement.

7. "**Raised walk area**" means a portion of the landscape right of way approximately three feet wide, usually parallel to the traffic lanes which may be paved or unpaved, distinguished by some elevation above the street pavement level and marked by curbing, drainage ditch, grass area or fencing; apart from and independent of any painted safety markings along the street pavement.

8. "**Pupil**" means any individual of school age enrolled in a public or nonprofit private school located within the school district or contiguous school district as the case may be.

Provision of Transportation

Transportation by private carrier may be provided whenever such practice is more economical than using school district-owned/leased facilities. If parents volunteer, and the administration permits, parents may be reimbursed for transportation of eligible students whenever such practice is more economical or convenient for the school district.

In determining the provision of transportation for resident public and eligible private school students, the following guidelines regarding walking distances will be considered. Distance measurements will be based on the most direct route from the student's home beginning at a point at the curb or edge of a public road or highway nearest the home to the edge of the school property or bus pickup areas.

Grade	Limit
K	1 mile
1-3	1 mile
4-6	1 ¼ miles
7-12	1 ½ miles

Students living within the stated distance limits will receive transportation when, in the opinion of the Board, it is in the best interests of the district to provide transportation.

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 3541(c)**

RE: Transportation - Students

Adopted: 11/12/2002
Revised: 10/6/2015
Revised:

Hazardous Conditions

Priorities in the arrangement of bus routes include: safety, efficiency and the cost factor. Safety factors may vary with pickup and drop off and so be reflected in the bus route regarding service.

The administration shall consider the following guidelines for hazardous conditions when making decisions regarding the transportation of children:

1. A street or road having an adjacent or parallel sidewalk or raised walk area shall be deemed hazardous when any one of the following conditions exist:
    a. For pupils under age ten, or enrolled in grades K through 3:
        i. the absence of a pedestrian crossing light or crossing guard where three or more streets intersect; OR
        ii. street crossings where there are no stop signs or crossing guards and the traffic count during the time that pupils are walking to or from school exceeds sixty vehicles per hour at the intersection.
    b. For pupils over age ten, or enrolled in grades 4 through 12, the absence of a traffic light or stop signs or crossing guard at an intersection where three or more streets intersect which has a traffic count which exceeds ninety vehicles per hour during the time that pupils are walking to or from school;
    c. For all pupils:
        i. any street, road, or highway with speed limits in excess of forty miles per hour which does not have pedestrian crossing lights or crossing guards or other safety provisions at points where pupils must cross when going to or from school or the bus stop; OR
        ii. the usual or frequent presence of any nuisance such as open manholes, construction, snow plowed or piled on the walk area making walkways unusable, loading zones where delivery trucks are permitted to park on walkways, commercial entrances and exits where cars are crossing walking areas at speeds in excess of five miles per hour, and the like, including such nuisances which are hazardous or attractive to children.
2. Any street, road, or highway that has no sidewalks or raised walk areas shall be deemed hazardous if any one of the following conditions exist:

Hazardous Conditions (continued)

a. For pupils under age ten, or enrolled in grade K through 3:

   i. any street, road, or highway possessing a traffic count of sixty or more vehicles per hour at the time that pupils are walking to or from school; OR

   ii. any street, road, or highway possessing a speed limit in excess of thirty miles per hour.

b. For all pupils:

   i. the presence of man-made hazards including attractive nuisances, as stated in 1(c)(ii) above; OR

   ii. any roadway available to vehicles that does not have a minimum width of approximately twenty-two feet; OR

   iii. any roadway available to vehicles that, when plowed free of snow accumulations, does not have a minimum width of approximately twenty feet; OR

   iv. any street, road, or highway where the line-of-sight visibility together with posted speed limits do not permit vehicular braking/stopping in accordance with the Connecticut Drivers Manual or Department of Transportation, Division of Design Standard, or other reasonable standard.

3. Any walkway, path, or bridge in an area adjacent or parallel to railroad tracks shall be considered hazardous unless a suitable physical barrier along the entire pedestrian route is present and fixed between pupils and the track; and any crossing of railroad tracks carrying moving trains during hours that pupils are walking to or from school or to and from a designated bus pick-up area shall be deemed hazardous unless:

   a. a crossing guard is present; OR

   b. for pupil under age ten, an automatic control bar is present at crossings; OR

   c. for pupils over age ten, a bar or red flashing signal light is operational.

4. For pupils in grades K through 4, the following conditions shall be deemed hazardous:

Hazardous Conditions (continued)

a. a lake, pond, stream, culvert, water-way, or bridge shall be deemed a hazard in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier fixed between the pupil and the water; OR

b. any area adjacent to a roadway, sidewalk, or bridge having a drop of three or more feet per four feet of travel length on either side of the established lanes, in the absence of a fence or other suitable barrier.

5. For pupils in grades K through 8, walking to or from school or the bus stop at any time prior to one-half hour before sunrise or any time one-half hour after sunset shall be deemed hazardous.

6. For all students, walking along any street, road, walkway, sidewalk, or path designated as a walking route which passes through an area which has a history of aggressive acts of molestation resulting in actual or threatened physical harm or moral degradation during the hours when pupils ordinarily walk to or from school shall be deemed hazardous.\

Applicability and Exceptions

1. This policy is applicable to public roads approved and maintained by the municipality or State of Connecticut, or private roads approved for passage of school transportation vehicles in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-220c. ~~This policy is applicable to private roads approved for passage of school transportation vehicles in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-220c~~.

2. Special Education pupils and pupils eligible for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act shall be judged on an individual basis, and appropriate transportation provided.

3. The Board of Education may grant an exception to any guideline set forth in this policy where a peculiar condition or combination or conditions renders such condition(s) a hazard based upon reasonable judgment; or where under the circumstances, other conditions exist under which the safety of students necessitates a variance with the guidelines within this policy.

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 3541(f)**

RE: Transportation - Students

Adopted: 11/12/2002
Revised: 10/6/2015
Revised:

Access to Bus Stops/Transportation

Parents and/or guardians are responsible for ensuring the safety of their children up until the, point when students board the school bus or other school provided transportation, and after students get off the bus after school. This responsibility includes the selection of walking routes to/from any bus stop and/or the school building and the provision of supervision that is appropriate to the student's age, maturity and conditions along the walking route and/or at the bus stop at all times.

Given that bus pick up times may vary, the Board expects that parents and/or guardians will ensure that their children arrive at the bus stop 10 minutes in advance of any scheduled pick-up time.

Bus drivers are required to maintain a regular time schedule and pupils are required to be at a designated stop on time. Driver will stop only at designated places.

Students in grades PreK through 2 shall be released from school bus transportation only when an authorized adult or parent-designated individual is present at the bus stop. If no authorized individual is present at the time of drop-off, the student shall not be released and shall be returned to the school.

Requests to extend, add or change existing bus routes, or to add or change a bus stop, should be made in writing to the school office or Principal who shall confer with the appropriate personnel, i.e. the district Transportation Coordinator and bus contractor.

Alternate Care Requests

Requests to have a student picked up and/or dropped off at-a home childcare must be made in writing to the Transportation Coordinator. These requests will be honored provided the there is an existing bus route assigned to that location in the district and there is seating space available on the bus. Seating priority will be given to students who residences are located on an existing bus route. (These requests will only be granted for Bloomfield residents for a home or childcare site located in the Town of Bloomfield)

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 3541(g)**

RE: Transportation - Students

Adopted: 11/12/2002
Revised: 10/6/2015
Revised:

Eligibility for Out-of-Town Transportation

Bloomfield Public Schools will not provide transportation to out-of-town schools except as required by State Statutes.

- Any resident of the school district under twenty-one years of age who is not a high school or vocational school graduate and who is attending a state vocational school shall be eligible for transportation.
- A student who is placed by a Planning and Placement Team for special education reasons in either a public or private educational institution out-of-town shall be provided the necessary transportation.

Transportation Dispute and Appeal

When a decision regarding transportation services is disputed, the Board of Education shall provide an appeal process and conduct any required hearing in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §10-186.

Any parent, guardian, student who is 18 years of age or older, or any official responsible for enforcing school attendance laws may appeal a transportation decision by following these steps:

1. The matter shall first be discussed with the Principal of the school to which the student is assigned.

2. If the matter is not resolved at the school level, it shall be referred to the Transportation Coordinator.

3. If the matter remains unresolved, it shall be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools or designee for review.

Any parent, guardian, student who is 18 years old or older, or any official responsible for enforcing school attendance laws may request a hearing in writing if they believe the Superintendent or their designee is not providing required school services—such as transportation—in accordance with Connecticut law or Board regulations. The hearing will be held before the Board of Education or an impartial hearing officer to review the concern and determine whether the required services have been properly provided.

The Board shall hold a hearing within ten (10) days following receipt of such request.

Transportation Dispute and Appeal (continued)

Transportation hearings will be conducted in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-186, and with Connecticut General Statutes, Sections 4-177 to 4-180, inclusive upon written request.

Safety Complaint Procedure

The superintendent of schools shall develop and implement a procedure for the reporting of all complaints relative to school transportation safety and shall cause to be maintained a written record of all such complaints received. (See Policy 3541.5)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-186 Duties of local and regional boards of education.

10-220 Duties of boards of education.

10-221c Development of policy for reporting complaints regarding school transportation safety

14-275b Transportation of mobility impaired students.

14-275c Regulations re school buses and motor vehicles used to transport special Education students.

POSITION STATEMENT AND POLICY GUIDANCE

Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools:

Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health

STATE OF CONNECTICUT | CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION | AUGUST 2024

The Connecticut State Board of Education (Board) believes that all students deserve an excellent education that supports growth in knowledge, maturity, wellness, and readiness for a life of success and global citizenship. The Board's *Comprehensive Plan for Education 2023-2028*: *Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School* prioritizes creating learning spaces that are safe, compassionate, and culturally responsive, and that are designed to support the academic, physical, and social-emotional well-being of all learners. The Board further believes that schools must ensure that Personal Technology Use in Schools policies address student relationships with technology, online spaces, social media, and cell phones and their impact on learning and mental health.

Technology can be employed in schools to personalize and accelerate learning when integrated thoughtfully and appropriately. Students benefit from instruction that incorporates hands-on and digital tools in conjunction with comprehensive digital citizenship modeling and media literacy curricula that teaches technology skills to prepare students for lifelong success. Online platforms can also give youth access to a diverse community, expanding their awareness of others who share abilities and interests, leading to an increased sense of belonging and acceptance. Online educational content can introduce students to different world views, expanding their minds to gain a better understanding of others and the world.

However, in 2023, the United States Surgeon General issued an *Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health,* which highlights the concerning relationship between excessive, unrestricted social media use and increased mental health challenges in youth. Additionally, emerging research suggests that social media has a significant negative impact on brain development at a time in adolescence when identities and a sense of self-worth are forming, and social rewards, pressures and acceptance are paramount.

Students who feel intellectually, physically, and emotionally safe and healthy are more likely to be successful learners. In order to create a school environment that promotes health and safety, it is important to note the impact that unrestricted access to cell phones and social media can have on learning spaces. Between the ages of 10 and 14 the number of students with smartphones more than doubles, from 4 in 10 to 9 in 10. Notifications during the school day and the lure of social media platforms negatively impact students' ability to be fully present in the classroom (UNESCO) resulting in lost instructional time, fewer opportunities for in-person interactions, and significant competition for dedicated and sustained student attention reported by teachers (Pew Research Center).

Given the risks and negative impact on learning and mental health, local and regional boards of education, in collaboration with school leaders, educators, families and students, should develop and enact a districtwide Personal Technology Use in Schools policy inclusive of cell phones and current and emerging technologies.

Therefore, the Board strongly recommends that such policy restricts the use of cell phones during the school day to ensure student engagement in learning, support emotional well-being, and strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.

POLICY GUIDANCE
Personal Technology Use in Schools

The Connecticut State Board of Education (Board), in support of its Position Statement on Personal Technology Use in Schools, offers the following guidance for districts to consider when drafting and adopting policies to restrict access to cell phones during the school day. This guidance emphasizes creating engaging spaces for learning to mitigate the negative impact that cell phones have on student learning. Included in this guidance are considerations for specific policies and practices in elementary, middle, and high school based on developmental readiness and maturity. Specific recommendations are provided for appropriate roles and responsibilities for local and regional boards of education and administrators in policy development; for school leaders and educators in ensuring consistent policy implementation; for families and students in supporting and complying with the district policy; and for higher education institutions and the Connecticut State Department of Education in preparing and supporting educators, school leaders, administrators, and local and regional boards of education.

A comprehensive policy should include language that incorporates age-appropriate restrictions that align with developmental considerations of students and the structure of the school day in each grade-band and school.

- **Elementary School**
  - The policy for elementary school students should focus on removing cell phones from the classroom to maximize academic, social, and emotional development. Elementary school students' school day environments and experiences and classroom activities should create spaces that encourage personal interaction among peers.
  - Specific procedures for collecting and isolating cell phones upon arrival at school or in the classroom may be necessary to ensure compliance with the policy.
- **Middle School**
  - The policy for middle school students should also focus on removing cell phones from the school day or classroom. Developmentally, this age group is particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of excessive personal technology use and has a difficult time controlling their impulses. Concurrently, middle school students experience increased autonomy and independence during the school day, which can lead to increased opportunity for cell phone misuse.
  - Possession of cell phones in this age group is likely to be viewed as a rite of passage into adulthood, so communication and application of policies that restrict use must be developed in consideration of the specific challenges of middle school students.
- **High School**
  - The policy for high school students regarding school day access and use should still be restrictive; however, as appropriate, high school students may be developmentally ready to take more ownership of controlling excessive use and understanding responsibilities regarding technology use to better prepare them for life after high school.
  - Inappropriate and potential illegal use of technology is likely to increase in high school on and off school grounds, including accessing and sharing inappropriate content and cyberbullying, requiring inclusion of expectations regarding technology use in the student Code of Conduct.
  - Cell phones that are turned off and kept out of sight create classroom environments where students are less likely to be distracted by interruptions, can focus more on learning, and allow educators to concentrate on instruction instead of constantly monitoring student cell phone use. The policy should therefore address high school students having cell phones on their person during class.

Responsibilities of local boards of education and superintendents of schools in developing a Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy

- Engage and elicit feedback from school leaders, educators, families, students, and relevant stakeholders in the development and adoption of a policy that aims to mitigate the negative impact of unrestricted access to personal technology in schools.
- Consider the development of associated regulations that align with the policy and provide for professional learning of all school staff in the implementation of the policy.
- Ensure that the foundation for the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy is districtwide in its vision, scope, and implementation.
- Consider the unique vulnerabilities and opportunities of different student developmental stages to create age-appropriate segments of the districtwide policy.
- At all age levels, behavioral expectations related to technology should be included in the student Code of Conduct to address issues such as cyberbullying, accessing/sharing inappropriate content, recording or taking photographs without consent, plagiarism, and the unapproved use of artificial intelligence (AI) software and applications.
- Embed a Personal Technology Use in Schools policy within a broader, intentional digital educational strategy. Consider a systemic approach toward developing digital literacy and citizenship to ensure that it is comprehensive and equips students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 with the skills and tools necessary to safely navigate online spaces.
- Assist families in understanding healthy uses of technology, setting ground rules, utilizing parental controls on devices, and ways to monitor technology use.
- Review and update the district policy regularly to address future technological devices, online platforms, and emerging threats.
- Consult board legal counsel during policy drafting and as needed to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and alignment with best practices. Areas to consider include: school personnel access to content on student personal technology devices; consequences for violations of board policy or student Code of Conduct; accessing or disseminating inappropriate, harmful, or illegal content; material created on personal devices that may fall under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or constitute part of an educational record; and access for students with disabilities or medical needs as outlined in individualized education programs (IEP) and Section 504 accommodations.

Responsibilities of school leaders and educators in supporting consistent implementation of the policy

- **School Leaders:**
  - Engage educators, families, and students in a mindful introduction to the Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy that is sensitive to the concerns of all involved.
  - Support educators in learning about the policy and the consistent, uniform application and enforcement of the district policy and associated regulations.
  - Provide educators with professional development on best practices for incorporating technology into classroom lessons and activities using allowable school-issued devices.
  - Develop a graduated response to inappropriate personal technology use that encourages students to see the value in a cell-phone-free space and creates opportunities to develop positive skills related to technology use.
  - Create a process for exceptions to the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy based on a student's specific needs and as appropriate according to each student's individualized education program (IEP), Section 504 accommodations, individualized health care plan, or learning plan.
  - Create a positive environment regarding media and technology by incorporating digital citizenship education as part of the curricula.

- **Educators:**
  - Recognize that impulse control is a skill that needs to be developed and that students require support and instruction to establish healthy and responsible relationships with technology and social media.
  - Create engaging lessons that foster in-person group work and collaboration among peers to strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.
  - Model the digital habits and the utilization of personal technology and social media in alignment with the district policy.
  - Participate in professional learning opportunities related to supporting positive digital habits, digital citizenship, and integrating the effective use of technology in the classroom.

Responsibilities of families, caregivers, and students to support the implementation of and adherence to the policy

- **Families and Caregivers:**
  - Promote student engagement in learning by being mindful of communicating with students via cell phone during the school day and encourage children to use planning and problem-solving skills, coping strategies, and in-school supports to help foster independence.
  - Support school initiatives to create technology-free spaces that allow students to fully participate in their education while encouraging in-person connections with peers and adults.
  - Model a healthy relationship with social media and screen time at home and reduce the use of technology as a tool for occupying young children.
  - Consider using age-appropriate parental controls on smartphones to encourage the development of healthy relationships with technology.
  - Establish open lines of communication with children and have regular conversations regarding the safe and responsible use of technology.

- **Students:**
  - Request to participate in opportunities to provide feedback in the development of the district policy and grade-band specific policies, as appropriate.
  - Follow the district Personal Technology Use in Schools policy and the student Code of Conduct.
  - Engage in lessons and classroom discussions related to social and emotional learning, digital citizenship, media literacy, and the responsible use of technology.
  - Encourage peers to use technology and social media appropriately, including being aware of and limiting the frequency with which they check their cell phones.
  - Report concerning and inappropriate cell phone use and online behavior by peers to a principal, teacher, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or any trusted adult in the school building.

Responsibilities of state-level partners in preparing educators and supporting districts in developing and implementing district policies

- **Higher Education Institutions (Educator Preparation Programs):**
  - Participate in initiatives related to technology use in schools, including the development of model curricula for digital citizenship, media literacy, and responsible use of technology and social media.
  - Prepare pre-service candidates to effectively create a positive learning environment in accordance with the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching, focusing on evidence-based approaches to incorporating 21st century technology in the classroom.
  - Prepare pre-service candidates to develop student skills and dispositions to respond to real-world digital challenges in safe, effective, and thoughtful ways.
  - Contribute to the field of emerging research and best practices related to personal technology use by children and adolescents.

- **Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE):**
  - Develop a Kindergarten through Grade 12 Model Curricula for Digital Citizenship, Media Literacy, and Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media.
  - Provide professional learning and technical assistance on the effective integration and implementation of the Kindergarten through Grade 12 Model Curricula.
  - Continue to invest in resources that assist school districts in policies that address emerging technologies.
  - Monitor future national guidance and federal resources for dissemination to aid districts in maintaining prevailing content in district policies.
  - Coordinate and partner with state agencies, policymakers, and stakeholders to support district efforts in policy development and implementation.
  - Continue support of and collaboration with the research community to gather data to support district policies and elevate best practices.

Connecticut Sample Policies

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) has developed a Sample Policy and Guidance for local and regional boards of education. CABE is currently updating this document for use by districts in developing policies.

Connecticut Association of Boards of Education: Sample Policy and Guidance: Adopted January 2019, revised November 2023

The following excerpts from sample policies and resources are meant to provide an array of content for districts to consider in developing their own policy to restrict cell phone use during the school day. Policies should consider the needs, ages, and utilization of social media and technology of students; the norms of the school-family relationships and expectations; and the teaching and learning needs of the school community. They are not intended to imply one strategy or policy is best or more successful than another, as this must be determined by the local or regional board of education as to what meets the needs of the district, its staff, families, and students.

Torrington Public Schools

- **Elementary school:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must turn their cell phones off or place them on silent mode. Cell phones and wearable technology must remain completely out of view (e.g., in the student's backpack) for the entire school day.
- **Middle School:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a district issued cell phone pouch throughout the entire school day. Students will lock their cell phone pouches upon entry to the building and unlock them at dismissal.
- **High School:** Students may bring cell phones and wearable technology to school but must ensure that they are turned off or on silent mode and locked in a district issued cell phone pouch throughout the entire school day. Students will lock their cell phone pouches upon entry into the school building and unlock them at dismissal. Cell phones will only be allowed if requested by a teacher as necessary for a specific lesson, upon approval by an administrator 24 hours in advance. If approved, the mobile kiosk will be signed out to the teacher for that period or the day. At no time will students be obligated to possess or own a personal electronic device to meet their educational needs.

Milford Public Schools

- **Elementary School:** No use of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device will be permitted during school hours. These devices must be turned off or on silent and left in backpacks, stored in a student's locker/cubbie or other place designated by building administration.
- **Middle School:** No use of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device will be permitted during school hours. These devices must be turned off or on silent and left in backpacks, stored in a student's locker or other place designated by building administration. The exception at the middle school level is when the use of a cell phone is authorized in a classroom for academic purposes with the consent of the teacher.
- **High School:** Possession of a cell phone/smartwatch or other personal communication device while in school is permitted, however, the devices must be turned off or on silent and be out of sight in classrooms during the school day unless authorized by the classroom teacher for academic purposes. Cell phones may be used in non-classroom areas as designated by school administration.

Lisbon Public Schools

- **Grades PreK-Grade 4:** Cell phones/smartwatches are not permitted on school premises.
- **Grades 5-Grade 8:** Cell phones/smartwatches should be off and out of sight when students walk into the building. Cell phones/smartwatches are to be stored in lockers throughout the school day. Students are permitted to use their cell phones/smartwatches during after-school homeroom (3:00–dismissal) per the teacher's permission (for example: practice is canceled; a parent needs to be notified).
- Parents should not expect to communicate directly with their children using their cell phone/smartwatch during the designated school time. Parents who need to communicate with their child in the case of an emergency should call the school office and communicate with school personnel the nature of their emergency who will then communicate as appropriate with the student impacted by the emergency.

References and Resources

Social Media and Mental Health

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health The Surgeon General's Advisory (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Does Social Media Use Cause Depression Child Mind Institute (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Constant Companion: A Week in the Life of a Young Person's Smartphone Use Common Sense Media (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Engaging, Safe, and Evidence-Based: What Science Tells Us About How to Promote Positive Development and Decrease Risk in Online Spaces for Early Adolescents UCLA Center for Developing Adolescents (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Anxious Generation*. Penguin, March 26, 2024.

Social Media's Impact on Brain Development

How Social Media Use Affects Adolescent Brain Development New York-Presbyterian Health Matters (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Why Young Brains are Especially Vulnerable to Social Media American Psychological Association (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Digital Media and the Developing Brain The Handbook of Adolescent Digital Media Use and Mental Health Chiu, Michelle & Chein, Jason (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Potential Risks of Content, Features and Functions: The Science of How Social Media Affects Youth American Psychological Association (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Resources for Districts and Educators

Digital Citizenship, Internet Safety, and Media Literacy Guidelines and Recommended Actions Connecticut State Department of Education (2020) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Smartphones in School? Only When They Clearly Support Learning UNESCO (2023) *(accessed 8/9/2024)*

School-Based Initiatives Promoting Digital Citizenship and Healthy Digital Media Use The Handbook of Adolescent Digital Media Use and Mental Health Weintsein, Emily & James, Carrie (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Guiding Middle and High School Students to Develop a Clear Understanding of Their Cell Phone Use Edutopia (2022) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Smartwatches: The Next Challenge for School Cellphone Policies Education Week (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Cellphone Bans in School Are Back. How Far Will They Go? NEA Today (2023) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Student Social Media Use Goeler, Jody. The CABE Journal (May 2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Framing the Smartphone Policy Deliberations Goeler, Jody. The CABE Journal (June 2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

What's It Like To Be a Teacher in America Today? Pew Research Center (2024) *(accessed 8/13/2024)*

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Resources for Families and Caregivers

Online Health and Safety for Children and Youth: Best Practices for Families and Guidance for Industry Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers Child Mind Institute (2024) *(accessed 8/2/2024)*

Age-Based Media Reviews and Resources for Families Common Sense Media *(accessed 8/5/2024)*

Family Media Plan American Academy of Pediatrics *(accessed 8/5/2024)*

Connecticut Legislation

Play-based Learning:

Public Act 23-159 An Act Concerning Teachers and Paraeducators

School Climate:

Public Act 23-167 Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Public Act 24-45 An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief, School Discipline and Disconnected Youth

Framing the Smartphone Policy Deliberations

(Background Information for Policy Review Committee)

In the May 2024 CABE Journal article highlighting legislative action in various states banning or limiting cellphone use in schools, I referenced Jonathan Haidt's contribution to the debate, as it has gained significant attention. The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness is a work with a provocative title and perhaps a more compelling argument for banning cell phones, at least at the elementary level.

As a parent of two adolescents, Haidt recommends to other parents what he considers his most important suggestions:

- Give children far more time playing with other children. He suggests play should ideally be outdoors, in mixed age groups, with little or no adult supervision (which he notes is the way he grew up, at least until the 1980s);
- Look for more ways to embed children in stable real-world communities. He notes that online networks are not nearly as binding or satisfying;
- Don't give a smartphone as the first phone. Instead, he suggests giving smart devices that are specialized for communication, not for internet-based apps;
- Don't give a smartphone until high school. Here, he concedes this is easy to do if many of your child's friends' parents are doing the same thing – a "collective action" response;
- Delay the opening of accounts on nearly all social media platforms until the beginning of high school (at least). Again, he concedes this will become easier if we support legislators trying to raise the age of "internet adulthood" from today's 13 (with no verification system in place) to 16 (with mandatory age verification).

Perhaps many, distressed by the sight of young people hunched over their phones, unaware of others and their surroundings, embrace these suggestions. However, they require collective action from parents, legislators, and, dare I say, the companies themselves—to limit their children, change family norms and conditions, change algorithms, and eliminate the addictive nature of the apps themselves.

Given the widespread discussion of smartphone use among young people, taking a policy stance is a significant challenge for school boards. One can certainly appreciate Mr. Haidt's contributions to the topic as they add compelling testimony for boards to consider in their policy deliberations. Having reviewed a vast array of literature on this topic, the following considerations are provided to help boards frame deliberations on cellphone policy:

Addiction

Do we address cell phones and/or the apps they house as a matter of addiction? Are young people unable to use responsibly? Can we teach students how to use social media effectively and safely? Can we expect children to have the discipline to disconnect from social media and their phones (when most adults appear unable)? How do we consider the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy's call for restrictions on the use of smartphones during school hours, noting, "We fundamentally have to understand that these devices, and in particular social media, is behaving largely as an addictive element?" (www.govtech.com/education/k-12/pennsylvania-bill-would-lock-up-cellphones-during-school, May 8, 2024)

To what extent do social media and smartphone use contribute to mental health issues? As one student puts it, "Students are part of the hustle culture, where rest isn't prioritized and taking on more pressure is normalized. (Olina Banerji, Education Week, "Social Media Bans Alone Won't Improve Mental Health, Say Student Advocates," May 3, 2024) To what extent can smartphones positively impact student mental health and well-being by helping students find friends and establish safe spaces where marginalized students can connect with peers like them? Can social media provide a space where students can have open and safe conversations about their mental health?

Educational Opportunities

How can schools teach students to develop discipline to restrict their social media use when required to do so in school or at work? How can schools teach students to differentiate between propaganda and legitimate news stories and sources online? What opportunities do schools have to teach and promote safe, responsible, and intentional smartphone use to develop the skills and attributes needed for digital citizenship?

School Culture and Climate

To what extent does social media access during school hours adversely impact school climate? Based on an analysis of discipline data, does social media access during the school day escalate disruptive behavior and violent conflict?

As boards consider these competing areas of interest, it's difficult to dismiss arguments made in The Anxious Generation, as well as the Office of the Surgeon General's advisory, stressing, "It can't be sure that spending hours a day on cellphones is safe for young people's mental health." (govtech, May 8, 2024)

On the other hand, the board's mission is to ensure better learning outcomes for digital citizenship students, preparing all students for a lifetime of continued learning, civic engagement, and opportunity. Similar language appears in various district Portraits of a Graduate and other aspirational documents.

Therefore, the question for boards of education isn't whether students should have access to technology in school; it's what such access looks like. If students are banned from using smartphones responsibly at school, what tools or knowledge do they apply to their smartphone use after school?

What makes the cellphone debate interesting and challenging from a policy perspective is it causes boards to deliberate on fundamental concerns related to the role of the district in educating students on the responsible use of technology, its obligation to ensure student safety, provide a positive school climate, and support student physical and mental health and general well-being. Including students, professional staff, and parents in deliberations and reviewing the vast array of articles, books, and research on this topic will help guide boards in developing a responsible-use policy that focuses on learning opportunities and provides space for embedding rapid technological changes before us.

At its August 21, 2024, meeting, the CT Board of Education approved a position statement and policy guidance on Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools developed by the Department of Education. These guidelines provide Boards with excellent direction and available resources to assist them in their policy deliberations and are available in the Appendix following this policy.

Policy Implications

Over the years, cell phone policies have worked from total bans to limited use to new versions of restricted use. In recent years, there has been a major cultural shift around mobile phones, especially smartphones.

Bringing devices to school seems inevitable. Cell phone technology is here to stay. Keeping up with changes is not easy, but schools have adapted to technological changes in the past and will adjust again to current technology and conditions. Personal technology policies and regulations can be included in district responsible use policies.

The following narrative was included in the October 2024 Issue of Policy Update.

Policy 5131.81
Personal Technology Use in Schools

While continuing to provide districts with previously developed model policies on this topic, this model policy complies with the Position Statement and Policy Guidelines for Personal Technology use in Connecticut Schools developed by the CT State Department of Education and adopted by the CT Board of Education on August 21, 2024.

The narrative has been updated to reflect recent thinking, research, and national legislative movements that have led to a more restrictive approach to cell phone and personal technology access in schools, especially in elementary and middle schools. In addition to the research guiding greater restrictions, new technologies such as pouches reduce anxiety about parting with one's device by keeping it deactivated and inaccessible. However, with limited phone use, school administrators will need to consider a range of factors when developing actionable, sustainable regulations to implement restrictive policies effectively.

Boards of education will also need to consider the costs associated with restrictive policies.

Boards and superintendents must consider a range of questions and logistical matters when guiding their decisions and the long-term viability of their policies. Such considerations would include:

Considerations for collecting cell phones

- Will the District purchase collection pouches? How much will they cost? Will this be an annual expense? Will students be required to keep their phones in their pouches? How can a student access his/her phone during the school day? What will be the procedure for a student to gain such access?
- Will cell phones be confiscated? What will the consequences be for a student who violates the policy? If phones will be confiscated, at what point? By whom? Where will the phone be held? Who will retrieve it? If a parent must retrieve the phone, what happens if the parent works during school hours? What procedures will be in place if a parent does not have access to transportation?

- If a staff member confiscates a phone, does it have to be delivered to and held in the office? Who collects and holds the phone? Who calls the parent to retrieve the phone? What procedures are in place if the parent does not respond to the call?

The good news is that several districts in Connecticut have successfully launched regulations and procedures reflecting various levels of restriction and continue to share their experiences, successes, and lessons learned along the way.

Policy #5131.81 pertains to this topic and follows for your consideration. We also updated the previous samples, which are available below. The number and variety of these models give local districts a range of options when revising the existing policy. The Position Statement Policies and Policy Guidance on Personal Technology Use in Schools, developed by the CSDE and approved by the State Board of Education on August 21, 2024, is included in the Appendix. https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/board/position_statement_cell_phone_use.pdf

Policy should reflect a district's obligation to educate students to become responsible, engaged digital citizens, and it should be enforceable.

January 2019
Reviewed November 2023
Revised August 2024
Revised September 2024

Separate PDF File

5131.81 Connecticut State Department of Education Position Statement

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/board/position_statement_cell_phone_use.pdf

This Model Policy reflects the "Position Statement and Policy Guidance for Personal Technology Use in Connecticut Schools: Impact of Social Media and the Use of Cell Phones on Student Learning and Mental Health" developed by the CT State Department of Education and adopted by the CT Board of Education on August 21, 2024.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

The _____ Board of Education believes that students who feel emotionally and intellectually safe in their school environment are more likely to engage in their learning and reach their fullest potential.

Emerging research suggests that social media negatively impacts brain development during adolescence when identities and a sense of self-worth are forming, and social rewards, pressures, and acceptance are paramount. This research, as well as the addictive algorithms embedded in social media platforms themselves, is of concern to the Board, as the Board recognizes that the technology that allows unfettered access to social media interferes with the opportunities the District provides to ensure students benefit from school environments that build skills in social interaction and communication, provide for stimulating intellectual engagement in the classroom, and support peer-to-peer/adult relationship building.

Thus, to safeguard the learning environment and enhance system-wide opportunities for student academic success and overall well-being, the _____ Board of Education shall restrict the use of personal technology in all district schools and provide the following guidance to the Superintendent in working with his/her staff, students, and parents/guardians in establishing administrative regulations that differentiate among elementary, middle, and high school levels.

The Board recognizes that a collective response is required to ensure all community members work together to ensure all students have full access to the District curriculum, day-to-day instructional opportunities, healthy and constructive peer-to-peer relationships, and the foundational skills and attitudes that promote effective digital citizenship.

Definitions:

Restrictions means limiting conditions or the limitation or control of someone or something.

Personal Device means any device owned by an individual with the capability to process, store, transmit, or access information independently. This includes but is not limited to, mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, PCs, laptops, and cameras.

Collective Action means an action taken together by a group of people (Board of Education, Administration, Staff, Students, and Parents/Caregivers) to achieve a common objective (limit the distractions and the addictive algorithms embedded in social media apps).

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices (continued)

Policy Implementation Guidelines:

- Emphasis shall be placed on creating engaging learning spaces to mitigate the negative impact that personal devices have on student learning.
- Consideration shall be made for specific elementary, middle, and high school practices based on developmental readiness and maturity.
  - **Elementary School**
    - Practices shall focus on removing cell phones from the classroom to maximize academic, social, and emotional development.
    - School day environment, classroom experiences, and activities shall focus on creating spaces encouraging peer interaction.
    - Specific procedures for collecting and isolating cell phones upon arrival at school or in the classroom shall be effectively communicated to all school community members and enforced to ensure compliance with this policy.
  - **Middle School**
    - Practices shall focus on removing personal devices from the school day or classroom.
    - Specific procedures for collecting and isolating personal devices upon arrival at school or in the classroom shall be effectively explained to middle school students and parents considering the specific developmental characteristics of the young adolescent's need for increased autonomy and independence during the school day and concerns related to access to social media's addictive algorithms.
  - **High School**
    - Practices shall focus on restricting cell phone use in the classroom unless determined by the teacher as necessary for instructional purposes.
    - Practices that ensure appropriate filters are in place mitigate illegal use and access to inappropriate sites.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices (continued)

Responsibilities of the Board of Education and the Superintendent in Developing the District Personal Technology Use Policy:

- The Board and the Superintendent shall engage and elicit feedback from school leaders, educators, families, students, and relevant stakeholders in developing and adopting a policy that aims to mitigate the negative impact of unrestricted access to personal technology in the District's schools.
- The Superintendent shall develop administrative regulations that align with the policy and provide for the professional learning of all school staff in implementing the policy.
- The Board shall ensure that the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy's foundation is districtwide in its vision, scope, and implementation.
- The Superintendent shall develop a "digital educational strategy" that provides a systemic approach toward developing digital literacy and citizenship to ensure that it is comprehensive and equips all students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 with the skills and tools necessary to safely navigate online spaces.
- The Superintendent shall work with his/her team to assist families in understanding healthy uses of technology, setting ground rules, utilizing parental controls on devices, and ways to monitor technology use.
- The Board shall review and update the district policy regularly to address future technological devices, online platforms, emerging threats and legislative and court action.

Responsibilities in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy School Leaders:

- Engage educators, families, and students in an introduction to the Personal Technology Use in Schools Policy that is sensitive to the concerns of all involved.
- Support educators in learning about the policy and the consistent, uniform application and enforcement of the district policy and associated regulations.
- Provide educators with professional development on best practices for incorporating technology into classroom lessons and activities using authorized school-issued devices.
- Develop and implement a graduated response to inappropriate personal technology use that encourages students to see the value in a "cell-phone-free" space and creates opportunities to develop positive skills related to technology use.
- Create a process for exceptions to the Personal Technology Use in Schools policy based on a student's specific needs and as appropriate according to each student's individualized education plan (IEP), Section 504 accommodations, individualized health care plan, or learning plan.
- Incorporate digital citizenship education content and skills as part of the curricula.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Responsibilities in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy
School Leaders: (continued)

Teachers and Staff:

- Recognize that impulse control is a skill that needs to be developed and that students require support and instruction to establish healthy and responsible relationships with technology and social media.
- Create engaging lessons that foster in-person group work and collaboration among peers to strengthen students' interpersonal skills, peer interaction, and social communication.
- Model digital habits and the utilization of personal technology and social media in alignment with the district policy.
- Fully engage in professional development opportunities related to supporting positive digital habits, digital citizenship, and integrating the effective use of technology in the classroom.

Families and Caregivers:

- Promote student engagement in learning by refraining from communicating with students via personal devices during the school day and encourage children to use planning and problem-solving skills, coping strategies, and in-school supports to help foster independence**. (Provide your School Communication Plan here to alert parents how to reach a child in the case of an emergency or send a message. Such a plan should be streamlined and provide relatively easy access to the appropriate school personnel.)**
- Support school initiatives to create technology-free spaces that allow students to fully participate in their education while encouraging in-person connections with peers and adults.
- Model a healthy relationship with social media and screen time at home and reduce the use of technology as a tool for occupying young children.
- Consider using age-appropriate parental controls on smartphones to encourage the development of healthy relationships with technology.

Students:

- Participate in opportunities to provide feedback in the development of the District's policy and grade-band specific regulations as appropriate.
- Follow the District's Personal Technology Use in Schools policy and the student Code of Conduct.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Responsibilities in Supporting the Implementation of and Adherence to the District Policy
School Leaders: (continued)

Students: (continued)

- Engage in lessons and classroom discussions related to social and emotional learning, digital citizenship, media literacy, and the responsible use of technology.
- Encourage peers to use technology and social media appropriately, including being aware of and limiting the frequency with which they check their cell phones.
- Report concerning inappropriate cell phone use and online behavior by peers to a principal, teacher, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, or any trusted adult in the school building.

(cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
(cf. 5131.8 – Off School Grounds Misconduct)
(cf. 5131.82 – Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material)
(cf. 5131.911 – Connecticut School Climate Policy)
(cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
(cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
(cf. 5145.44 – Title IX/Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices
Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)
Trachtman v. Anker, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)
Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562 (1988)
Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)
Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist., 393 US 503, (1969)

Policy adopted:
cps 9/24

Sample policies are distributed for demonstration purposes only. Unless so noted, contents do not necessarily reflect official policies of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

A sample policy to consider.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that many students possess and use cellular telephones and other portable electronic devices. These ubiquitous devices serve an important purpose by facilitating communication between the student and his/her family and by providing access to electronic information. In the school setting, such portable electronic devices are permitted, provided their use is consistent with this policy and does not distract from the educational process or interfere with safety and security.

Alternate language:

> The Board of Education (Board) is committed to providing a safe, positive, and productive learning environment for its students. The Board recognizes that, depending on how they are used, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices can be either a valuable learning tool or a source of disruption in the learning environment. In order to maintain a secure and orderly learning environment, student use and possession of cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices shall be subject to the limitations set forth in this policy.

A growing body of evidence suggests that student access to cellular telephones and other electronic communication devices may be detrimental to student emotional well-being and academic growth. Therefore, the use of electronic communication devices and other such technology at school is considered a privilege, not a right.

Students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property and in school-sponsored transportation, provided they adhere to the restrictions contained in this policy. Any unauthorized use of cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices during the instructional school day or at such times as not authorized by the school principal or designee is prohibited, as it disrupts the instructional program or distracts from the educational environment.

1. ***Elementary School Students*:** Elementary school students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation, provided such devices are not visible, used, or activated, and are kept in the "off" position throughout the instructional school day. Students must keep their cellular phones and other wireless communication devices stored in a non-visible secure location during the instructional school day.

   Students may use their cellular phones and other wireless communication devices while waiting for the beginning of the instructional school day or waiting for a school bus at the end of the instructional school day.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices
(continued)

2. ***Middle and High School Students****:* Middle and high school students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation, provided such cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices are not visible, used or activated, and are kept in the "off" position throughout the instructional school day. Middle and high school students must keep their cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices stored in a non-visible secure location. Middle and high school principals may modify the instructional school day to establish other authorized times of use in addition to when students are waiting for the beginning of the instructional school day or waiting for a school bus at the end of the instructional school day, including the designation of areas of the school campus for such use.

Alternate language:

Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices shall be turned off during instructional or class time, or at any other time when such use would disrupt school activities. Cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices, which have the capability to take photographs or videos, shall not be used for such purposes while on school property or while a student is engaged in district-sponsored activities unless expressly authorized in advance by the principal or designee.

OR

The use of cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices in any manner that disrupts the educational environment or violates the rights of others, including the use of the device to take photographs in locker rooms or bathrooms, cheat, or otherwise violate student conduct rules, is prohibited. Prohibited conduct specifically includes creating, sending, sharing, viewing, receiving, or possessing an indecent visual depiction of oneself or another person.

Unless otherwise banned by this policy or by the building principal, all cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices must be powered off and out-of-sight during the regular school day unless: (a) the supervising teacher grants permission; (b) the use of the device is provided in a student's individualized education program (IEP); or (c) it is needed in an emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff, or other individuals.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices (continued)

Unauthorized Use of Devices

A student's possession, display or use of a cellular telephone and other wireless communication devices on school property contrary to the provisions of this policy shall be viewed as the unauthorized use of the cellular phone or other wireless communication devices when such possession, display or use of such devices results in conduct which includes, but is not limited to:

a. Interference with or disruption of the instructional or educational environment.
b. Use that violates academic integrity, such as reproducing images of tests, communicating test or examination contents or answers, providing access to unauthorized school information, or assisting students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates school Board policy or the Student Code of Conduct.
c. The communication of the marks or grades assigned to students resulting from evaluation or the actual contents, or parts thereof, of any evaluation activity being completed by an individual(s).
d. Use to commit a crime under federal or state law.
e. Violation of a student's or other person's reasonable expectation of privacy by using such devices with photographic capabilities in student locker rooms, restrooms, any other student changing areas, or the classroom, whether such use occurs during the instructional school day or on school property. Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices may not be utilized to take "photographs" or "videos" while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation or while a student is engaged in school-sponsored activities.
f. Use in a manner that is profane, indecent, obscene, threatening, discriminatory, bullying, or harassing language, pictures, or gestures. Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices which have the capability to take "photographs" or "moving pictures" shall not be used for such purposes while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation or while a student is engaged in school-sponsored activities.

Other Responsible Uses

Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices are permissible in the following circumstances:

a. ***Instructional or Educational Purposes.*** There is educational value in utilizing cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices in the classroom when such devices deliver content and extend, enhance, and/or reinforce a student's learning process related to the student's learning style, the instructional objectives of the class, and/or the learning environment. The appropriateness of in-class use of these devices consistent with the instructional objectives within instructional time will be determined by the classroom teacher with the approval of the building principal or designee.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Other Responsible Uses (continued)

b. ***IEP, 504, or Health Care/Medical Plan.*** Students may use cellular phones, wireless communication devices, and other electronic devices during class time when authorized pursuant to an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or a Health Care/Medical Plan with supportive documentation from the student's physician.
c. ***Health, Safety or Emergency Reasons.*** Exceptions to the restrictions in this policy, in part or in its entirety, may be made for health, safety, and emergency reasons by the principal.
d. ***School Trips or School-Sponsored Activities.*** The use, display, or activation of cellular phones or other wireless communication devices during school trips or school-sponsored activities shall be at the discretion of the principal or designee but shall not be disruptive to the activity.
e. ***Other Reasons.*** Other reasons determined appropriate by the principal.

Unauthorized use of these devices is grounds for confiscation by school officials, including classroom teachers. Repeated unauthorized use of such devices may lead to disciplinary action.

Responsibility/Liability

Any student who chooses to bring a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device to school shall do so at his or her own risk and shall be personally responsible for the security of his or her cellular phone or wireless communication device. Neither the school personnel nor the Board will assume any responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage, or vandalism to a cellular phone or other wireless communication device brought onto school property or for the unauthorized use of any such device.

(cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process)
(cf. 5131 – Conduct)
(cf. 5131.8 – Off School Grounds Misconduct)
(cf. 5131.82 – Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material)
(cf. 5131.911 – Bullying)
(cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying)
(cf. 5144 – Discipline/Punishment)
(cf. 5145.5 – Sexual Harassment)
(cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices

Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)

Trachtman v. Anker, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)

Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562 (1988)

Bethel School District v. Fraser, 478 US 675 (1986)

Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist., 393 US 503, (1969)

Policy adopted:
cps 1/19
reviewed 11/23
revised 8/24

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An administrative regulation to consider.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

The District recognizes the importance of technology in the educational setting. While cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices can support learning, they can also significantly distract the learning environment when used without teacher direction.

The use of electronic communication devices and other technology at school is a privilege, not a right.

Definitions

1. A **"cellular telephone or wireless communication device"** is a handheld or worn electronic device that can receive and/or transmit voice, text, or data messages without a cable connection. Such devices may include cellular telephones and digital wireless phones. This definition also includes any current or emerging wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems developed for similar purposes.

2. **"School property"** means any school building, bus, or facility, including grounds owned or occupied by the Board. The definition includes the location of a District-sponsored activity as well as transportation provided by the District to attend a District-sponsored activity.

3. ***"Instructional school day"*** means the moment a student enters the school building until the final dismissal bell. The "instructional school day" includes, but is not limited to, study halls and any other structured or non-structured instructional activity that occurs during the normal school day, including the administration of examinations, regardless of whether a student is on campus or at an off-campus school-sponsored activity.

4. **"Kept in the 'off' position"** means the device is powered completely off and is not simply set to vibrate, silent, standby, hibernation, or airplane mode.

Use of Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices at School or School Events

- The instructional day includes the entire school day from the start of the school bell to the dismissal bell, with the exception of the official lunch period at the high school level only.
- Students must power off and stow away cell phones and/or electronic communication devices prior to the start of the instructional day (the last bell for the start of school). During lunch, high school students may use their devices, but they must power off and stow away cell phones again at the official end of the lunch period.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Use of Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices at School or School Events (continued)

- Cell phones and/or electronic communication devices may not be accessed by students during the instructional day. Students may use them appropriately before and after the start of the school day. High school students may access their cell phones and/or electronic communication devices during the official lunch period and during the passing time between classes.
- The use of cell phones and/or electronic communication devices is strictly prohibited at all times in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or a school-related event. Devices used in this manner will be immediately confiscated.
- Individual school schedules may require some minor flexibility as approved by the principal.

Use of Cellular Telephones and Other Wireless Communication Devices in Classrooms

Teachers are encouraged to design lessons where the use of cellular telephones or other wireless communication devices is relevant to the course curriculum. Teachers will notify students when this type of use is authorized.

Teachers may direct students to use a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device during instructional time. Otherwise, such devices must be turned off or placed on silent and put away prior to the beginning of teaching. Headphones may not be visible during instructional time, and such devices may not be used outside the classroom during instructional time.

When a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device is in use for academic purposes, students are not permitted to:

- Answer an incoming text message or phone call;
- Be on any social media site;
- Access or play any game or access any entertainment site on their device;
- Access or use any app on their device unless expressly instructed by the teacher;
- Take any picture or video that the teacher has not expressly asked the student to take;
- Upload any picture or video taken in any class to any social media site or website;
- Text message or email any picture or video taken in class to any person, including themselves;
- Access any type of mobile web browsing for any reason unless directed by the teacher; or
- Take any picture, video, or text of any class assignments or assessments without permission.

Students

Electronic Devices

Personal Technology Use in Schools/Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices (continued)

Examples of Inappropriate Use

- Student use of cellular telephones or wireless communication devices for personal communication and entertainment and/or games is not permitted during the instructional day, from the official school start time to the end of the school day dismissal, which includes class periods, lunch period (elementary and middle schools only), and other specified times as determined by the administration.
- Communicating or displaying offensive messages, pictures, or language is never permitted at any time during the school day, at a school event, or on school buses. Devices used in this manner will be immediately confiscated.
- Cyberbullying, harassing, intimidating, coercing, threatening, or attacking others is never permitted. Making private information public is never permitted. Devices used in this manner will be immediately confiscated.

Enforcement Procedures

- Cellular telephones or other electronic communication devices must be surrendered to district personnel upon demand. Any student refusing to give the device to school personnel will be subject to discipline as provided in the student conduct code.
- All confiscated phones will be turned in at the school office as soon as possible and no later than 24 hours after being confiscated. Once a cell phone has been confiscated, the following procedures will be used to return the device:
  - The **first time** a cell phone and/or electronic communication device is confiscated, the student or parent can pick it up at the school office no earlier than the end of the school day. The school administration may contact the parent or guardian if needed. (Or: The teacher confiscates and returns to the student at the end of class.)
  - The **second time** a cell phone and/or electronic communication device is confiscated, it can be picked up at the school office. (Or: The teacher confiscates the device, gives it to the office, and the office returns it to the student at the end of the school day.)
  - The **third time** a cell phone and/or electronic communication device is confiscated, the teacher gives the device to the office, and the office notifies the parent to come pick it up at their convenience.
  - **Repeated offenses** within the same school year will result in the confiscation of the phone and return it only to the parent after a meeting with the parent and student, and appropriate disciplinary action is determined.

Regulation approved:
rev 11/23
rev 8/24

Sample policies are distributed for demonstration purposes only. Unless so noted, contents do not necessarily reflect official policies of the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Inc.

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 5112.1(a)**

RE: Preschool Lottery Process

Adopted: DATE

The Bloomfield Board of Education recognizes that enrollment demand for the Laurel Literacy Academy Preschool Program may exceed available classroom capacity. When the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of available preschool seats, enrollment shall be determined through a fair, impartial, and transparent lottery process.
This policy establishes uniform procedures for preschool enrollment while promoting equitable access for all eligible children.

I. Lottery Timeframe

A. Applications for the Laurel Literacy Academy Preschool Lottery shall be accepted beginning each September for enrollment in the following school year.
B. The application period shall close one (1) week prior to the annual lottery.
C. The annual lottery shall be conducted on the **last Friday in March** preceding the school year of enrollment.

II. Eligibility

Applicants shall meet all district residency requirements and the following age requirements:

- PK3 Children who attain three (3) years of age on or before September 1 of the school year for which enrollment is sought.
- PK4 Children who attain four (4) years of age on or before September 1 of the school year for which enrollment is sought.

Applicants who do not meet the required age by September 1 shall not be eligible to participate in the lottery for that school year.

III. Application Procedures

A. A completed preschool application must be received by the published lottery deadline, one (1) week prior to the lottery.
B. Applications for the lottery will be accepted beginning in September of the school year preceding enrollment.
C. Submission of an application does not guarantee enrollment.
D. Parents/guardians of children selected through the preschool lottery must complete all required registration forms, including submission of all required medical documentation, by the deadline provided in the lottery notification.
E. Failure to submit all required registration documents by the designated deadline will result in forfeiture of the child's enrollment position. In such cases, the next eligible child on the waiting list will be offered the available seat.

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 5112.1(b)**

RE: Preschool Lottery Process

Adopted: DATE

IV. Lottery Procedures

A. The lottery shall be conducted using a computerized randomization program or another verifiable random selection process approved by the Superintendent or designee.
B. Each applicant will be assigned a lottery number prior to the drawing. Lottery numbers will be randomly selected to fill available seats, beginning with applicants eligible for preferences as described in Section 6.
C. Once all available seats have been filled, remaining applicants shall be placed on a waitlist in the order selected.
D. The lottery shall be conducted under the supervision of the Superintendent or designee.

V. Wait List

A. Applicants not offered enrollment shall be placed on a waitlist according to lottery order.
B. Applications received after the lottery shall be placed at the end of the waitlist in chronological order of receipt.
C. The waitlist shall remain active until the annual lottery for the subsequent school year.
D. Vacancies occurring prior to expiration of the waitlist shall be filled in waitlist order.

VI. Preferences

The Board authorizes limited enrollment preferences that support family continuity and recruitment and retention of district employees.

Preference status does not guarantee admission.

No more than **thirty percent (30%)** of available preschool seats shall be filled through the preference lottery.

Applicants qualifying for multiple preferences shall receive only one preference opportunity.

Applicants not selected during the preference lottery shall automatically be included in the general lottery.

The following preferences apply, provided seats are available:

A. **Sibling Preference**
Preference shall be given to applicants who have a sibling enrolled at Laurel Literacy Academy during the upcoming school year.

B. **Staff Member Preference**
Preference shall be given to children of full-time, permanent Bloomfield Public Schools employees who reside in Bloomfield.

C. **Multiple Birth Siblings**
Twins, triplets, or other multiple birth siblings applying for the same preschool program shall be considered as one lottery unit.

Multiple birth siblings shall either:

1. receive enrollment together when sufficient seats are available; or
2. remain together on the waitlist in lottery order when sufficient seats are unavailable.

VII. Notification of Results

A. Lottery results shall be distributed no later than the second Friday in April.

B. Families shall be notified electronically using the email address provided on the application.

C. Notification shall indicate whether the applicant:

- has been offered enrollment; or
- has been placed on the waitlist.

VIII. Acceptance of Enrollment

Families offered enrollment shall accept or decline the offer by the deadline identified in the notification.

Failure to respond by the deadline shall constitute forfeiture of the enrollment opportunity.

The available seat shall then be offered to the next eligible applicant on the waitlist.

IX. Lottery Records and Audit

All records related to the lottery process, including lottery assignments, selection results, and waiting list placements, will be maintained by Bloomfield Public Schools.

Lottery records shall remain confidential and will be available for review by authorized personnel for auditing purposes to ensure the integrity and fairness of the lottery process.

X. Superintendent Oversight

The lottery process shall be supervised by the Superintendent of Schools or the Superintendent's designee to ensure compliance with these procedures and to maintain fairness, consistency, and transparency throughout the selection process.

BLOOMFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Bloomfield, Connecticut

BOARD POLICY **No. 5112.1(d)**

RE: Preschool Lottery Process

Adopted: DATE

By following these procedures, Laurel Literacy Academy Preschool seeks to provide a fair, transparent, and equitable lottery process that maximizes opportunities for eligible children while ensuring consistent administration of available preschool seats.

Legal Reference: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-15c, as amended by Public Act 23-208 and Public Act 26-1.