

# Phone-Free Schools Administrator Toolkit

Tools to implement  
a phone-free  
school environment.



**fairplay**  
childhood beyond brands

# A Note from the Founders

Adopting a phone-free school policy is one of the most impactful steps you can take to enhance student educational outcomes, behavior and well-being. Feedback from teachers, parents, and students in phone-free schools has been overwhelmingly positive. As this toolkit went to press, 17 U.S. states have recognized and acted on the urgency of the problem by enacting bell-to-bell school phone restrictions in 2025!

This toolkit is designed to help administrators engage all stakeholders, minimize pushback and facilitate a smooth transition to a phone-free environment. It was developed in close collaboration with our Advisory Board, teachers and administrators who have implemented effective policies and provides practical guidelines and insights for successful implementation.

The success of this change relies on the fidelity of implementation and consistency of enforcement, in order for all stakeholders to experience maximum benefits. We are committed to being a constant resource and support as you work through implementing this policy. If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to us via email. Together, we can create a more focused, positive, and enriching learning environment for all students.

Questions? Please contact us at [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org).

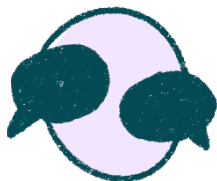
## Phone-Free Schools Movement Team



Sabine S. Polak  
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**LEARN. ENGAGE. THRIVE.**

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# What's Included



## Supporting Data

- Know the Impacts of Phones in Schools
- Research Infographic
- All Day is the Way



## Implementation Materials

- Rollout Timeline
- Implementation Guide
- Model Phone-Free Policy



## Stakeholder Communications

- Supporting School Phone Policies at Home
- Smartphones and School Emergencies
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Responding to Concerns
- Social Media Posts
- Letters
- Surveys



## Additional Resources

- Research Program
- Our Ongoing Support
- Final Thoughts



## How to Distribute

The Administrator Toolkit equips administrators with essential data, implementation resources and targeted communication necessary for successfully implementing a phone-free school policy. It includes various components tailored to different stakeholders. Each stakeholder group—teachers/staff, parents, and students—is represented by a distinct icon, as detailed in the Stakeholder Key below. Resources and communications throughout the toolkit have icons located in the bottom right corner of each page, indicating which information stakeholders should receive, ensuring a well-communicated and informed transition to a phone-free environment.

### Stakeholder Key



For Staff



For Parents



For Students



# Supporting Data

## Includes:

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Know the Impacts of Phones in Schools

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Research Infographic

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All Day is the Way

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# Know the Impacts of Phones in Schools

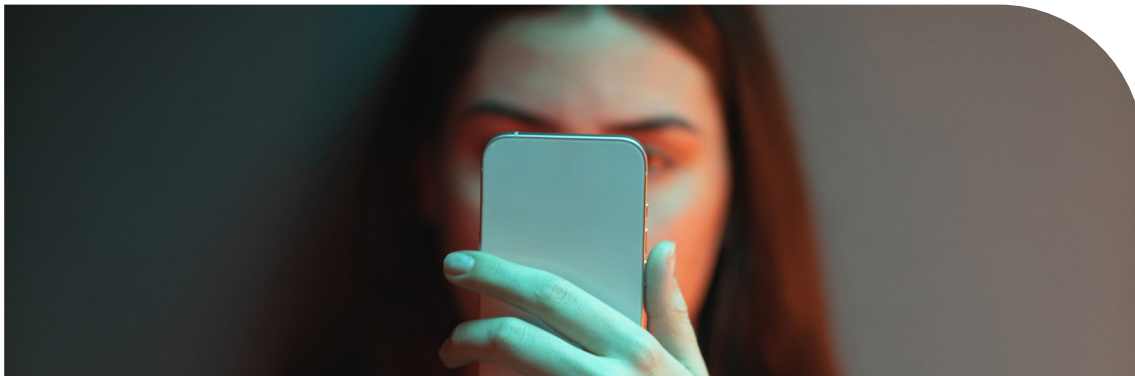
It's vital to consider the entire school day in order to understand the impact cell phones have on student outcomes and the need for a bell-to-bell phone-free policy. Schools are valuable not only for academic learning, but as places where critical social-emotional learning and essential life skills development take place. Policies that only limit phone use during class time fall short. This only addresses academic outcomes, whereas all-day policies promote the success of the whole child.

## Addictive Platforms

Understanding the platforms our children use is crucial for recognizing their potential impact on the school day. **Social media is intentionally designed to addict brains and hijack attention** by providing surges of dopamine that keep consumers coming back. Once the brain experiences these rushes of dopamine and pleasure, the high from social media becomes harder and harder for anyone to resist.

Unfortunately, because adolescents' brains and social skills are still developing, they're particularly susceptible to the addictiveness of social media. Bottom line: when given the choice between checking social media or paying attention in class, we cannot reasonably expect young people to opt for the latter.

[The Addictiveness of Social Media for Teens](#)



## Classroom Distractions

When students have access to their phones, classroom distractions drastically increase and engagement decreases. According to a Pew Research study, **72% of high school teachers report that cell phones are a major distraction in the classroom**.<sup>1</sup> Common Sense Media found that teenagers receive a median of 273 notifications a day, with nearly a quarter coming during school hours.<sup>2</sup> **Two-thirds of US students report they get distracted by using a digital device in the classroom** with 54% saying they were distracted by other students using their devices.<sup>3</sup> Studies also now indicate that the mere presence of a smartphone reduces the ability to focus.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>72% of U.S. High School Teachers Say Cellphone Distraction is a Major Problem in the Classroom

<sup>2</sup>CommonSense Media: Constant Companion: A Week in the Life of a Young Person's Smartphone Use

<sup>3</sup>Digital Distractions in Class Linked to Lower Academic Performance

<sup>4</sup>Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity.



## Academic Performance

Distractions from phones interrupt cognition—the process of acquiring knowledge or understanding—as well as the ability to retain and recall information. These distractions are strongly correlated with lower academic performance.<sup>1</sup> In one study, **students with a cell phone scored a whole letter grade lower on their exam.**<sup>2</sup> In addition, **35% of students admit to using their cell phones to cheat.**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PISA 2022 Results

<sup>2</sup> Dividing Attention in the Classroom Reduces Exam Performance

<sup>3</sup> 35% of Teens Admit to Using Cell Phones to Cheat



## Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is vital to students' development and provides lifelong benefits. It teaches students crucial life skills, including the ability to understand themselves, develop a positive self-image, take responsibility for their actions, and forge relationships with the people around them. The school day provides vast opportunities for these skills to develop. Lunchtime and free time between classes are opportunities for social exploration. Unfortunately, because **smartphones decrease the amount of time students spend engaging face-to-face** with their peers and teachers, schools that allow phones—or only bar them from the classroom—deprive students of the time needed to develop these important social skills.

## Mental Health

Fostering community and belonging is essential to good mental health. **Although smartphones and social media often make us feel like we're connected, in reality, the opposite is true.** When students aren't engaging in the world in healthy ways—like interacting with others, managing challenges, speaking up in class, or handling conflicts—they may feel more isolated. Spending more time online instead can increase feelings of alienation, hopelessness, anxiety, and depression. Research shows that **children and adolescents who spend more than three hours a day on social media face double the risk of mental health problems**, including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Social Media and Youth Mental Health

## Executive Functioning

Executive functioning encompasses abilities such as planning, organization, problem-solving, working memory, and decision-making. These abilities are vital for developing into a healthy and thriving adult. Since we aren't born with these skills, they must be developed through practice and experience over time. When children are pressured to remain in constant connection through phones, **it can undermine the trial and error necessary for them to strengthen these emerging skills.** But by having the space to navigate challenges independently, students build confidence in their ability to make decisions, solve problems, and manage tasks on their own—boosting both their executive functioning and self-assurance.

<sup>1</sup>[Children's Developing Executive Function](#)

## Safety

Smartphones pose a range of safety concerns in schools such as cyberbullying, the organizing of physical fights, privacy violations, and exposure to inappropriate and harmful content.



### During emergency situations, student smartphone use can also significantly undermine safety efforts:

- **Students must focus on adult instructions.** Phones distract from life-saving guidance given by teachers or first responders.
- **Phones compromise hiding and lockdown efforts.** Light and sound from phones can reveal student locations to an assailant.
- **Emergency communication channels must stay clear.** Mass calls or texts can overwhelm networks, delaying first responder coordination.
- **Parents rushing to school can delay emergency access.** Traffic caused by concerned parents may block or slow emergency vehicle response.
- **Crowds create confusion.** More people near the building increase risks and may complicate identification of threats.
- **Schools are equipped to manage emergency communications.** Trained personnel handle information flow and reduce misinformation.

For more information: [National Association of School Resource Officers](#)

# Research Infographic

**97%**  
OF STUDENTS USE PHONES DURING SCHOOL

An average of 43 minutes per day, spent primarily on social media, YouTube, and gaming

Common Sense Media

NEA POLL  
**83% of teachers** support an all day phone-free policy

National Education Association

**PHONES PREVENT FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION**

Research suggests that face to face communications are linked to better mental health.

Psychology today

**SOCIAL MEDIA IS NEARLY UNIVERSAL**

**40%** of 8 – 12 year olds are on social media

**95%** of teenagers are on social media

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health

**72%** OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS REPORT CELLPHONES ARE A MAJOR DISTRACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

The Mere Presence of a Cell Phone May be Distracting

Students not using their phones during class wrote down 62% more information.

Teens spend nearly **5 HOURS** a day on social media apps.

American Psychological Association

**50%+** of kids get **237 NOTIFICATIONS PER DAY**

Some receive as many as **4,500 EVERY DAY!**

**23%** occur during school

Common Sense Media

They also scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple choice test

The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning

**3+ Hours** PER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

doubles the risk of poor mental health including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety

Advisory on Social Media and Youth Mental Health

**RATES OF SCHOOL loneliness have** **X2** SINCE 2012

Worldwide Increases in Adolescent Loneliness



Since 2010

134%  Increase in anxiety

106%  Increase in depression

The Anxious Generation



Adolescents who experienced cyberbullying were more than

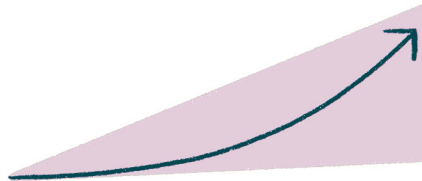
**Four Times**

as likely to report thoughts of

**Suicide & Attempts**

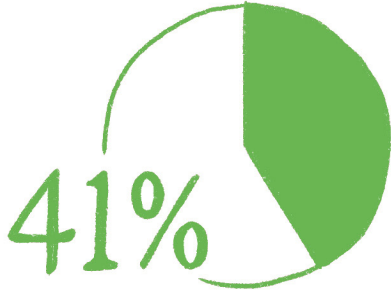
as those who didn't

National Institutes of Health



Each additional hour of total screen time increases the odds of suicidal behaviors

Science Direct



41% OF TEENS WITH THE HIGHEST SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor

American Psychological Association

YOUTH REPORTING

**LONELINESS**

are also more likely to **DROP OUT OF SCHOOL AT THE AGE OF 16**

Loneliness During the School Years



95% OF TEACHERS SAY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ARE A PROBLEM IN PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS

National Education Association



**35%** OF TEENS ADMIT TO USING THEIR CELLPHONE TO **cheat**

Common Sense Media

STEEP DROP IN BULLYING

**46% & 43%** OF GIRLS OF BOYS

experienced a reduction of bullying after smartphone bans were enacted.

Smartphone Bans, Student Outcomes and Mental Health

**Pornography Exposure**

1/3 of all teens reported that they have been exposed to pornography during the school day



Common Sense Media

**87%** of teachers said bullying is a problem in Public K-12 schools

**34%** of middle school teachers call bullying a major problem

National Education Association

OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED **Suicide** IN THE PAST YEAR

**22%**

HAVE ATTEMPTED **Suicide** IN THE PAST YEAR

**10%**

CDC, 2023



**“Brain Drain”**  
The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity

Brain Drain



# All Day is the Way

It's easy to understand how eliminating the distractions of smartphones from classroom time would be beneficial for student focus, engagement, and academic success. But why do we say phones should be off and away for the entire school day?

## INSTRUCTIONAL TIME ONLY BENEFITS



### ACADEMIC OUTCOMES IMPROVE

**Distractions from phones interrupt cognition** the process of acquiring knowledge or understanding—as well as the ability to retain and recall information. According to reports, these distractions are strongly correlated with lower academic performance.<sup>1</sup> In one study, students with a cell phone scored a whole letter grade lower on their exam.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PISA 2022 Results

<sup>2</sup> Dividing Attention in the Classroom Reduces Exam Performance



### LESS CHEATING

**35% of students admit to using their cell phones to cheat.** Students reveal that they're texting each other answers and using notes and information stored on their cell phones during tests.<sup>1</sup> Although kids have always found ways to cheat, removing these powerful aides from the classroom is an effective way to stifle the temptation. 35% of Teens Admit to Using Cell Phones to Cheat

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS WHEN PHONES ARE AWAY "ALL DAY"



### SCHOOL TIME OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM IS FOR LEARNING, TOO!

**Face-to-face engagement among peers is important for developing social-emotional skills.** Schools that have implemented phone-free policies report that students are engaged and lively in hallways and the lunchroom, rather than staring at phones.



### MID-CLASS ABSENTEEISM DECREASES

**Students using trips to the restroom to access phones has become a major problem for teachers.** With apps designed to get kids hooked, there's a level of competition among students to constantly be responding, sharing, and texting. The FOMO (fear of missing out) makes it difficult for students to go a class period without feeling the need to check social media.



### MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVES

Research shows that teens who use social media over **three hours each day face twice the risk of having negative mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety symptoms.** Constant contact with parents can often fuel student anxiety, especially when parents set unreasonable expectations about contact and responsiveness. Eliminating smartphones from the school day gives students at least seven hours a day away from their devices. How Social Media Affects Your Teen's Mental Health: A Parent's Guide



### MORE FOCUSED & PRODUCTIVE CLASSROOM TIME

When students have access to cell phones and social media between classes, it's harder for them to reshift their focus to learning once they're back in the classroom. This is referred to as **"task shifting," and is widely known to decrease cognitive efficiency.**<sup>1</sup> According to a study, it takes the brain 23 minutes and 15 seconds to refocus after being distracted.<sup>2</sup> For example, students exposed to a troubling text message or the latest drama playing out on social media aren't likely to be able to switch their focus quickly back to the lesson being taught.

<sup>1</sup>The Switch-Cost of Multitasking

<sup>2</sup>The Cost of Interrupted Work: More Speed and Stress



### TEACHER MORALE & RETENTION GOES UP!

Teachers no longer have the burden of policing phones, allowing **lively, engaged** learning to return to the classroom.



### PRACTICING INDEPENDENCE

Encouraging independence in a **safe and controlled school environment** fosters a child's self-confidence, resilience, and problem-solving ability.



### SAFETY IMPROVES

There's a dramatic **decrease in discipline referrals, cyberbullying, physical fights, and privacy violations.**



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# Implementation Guide

## Includes:

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Rollout Timeline

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Implementation Guide

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Model Phone-Free Policy

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# Rollout Timeline

## 1 Planning

(2 + months prior to launch)

- Distribute pre-surveys to teachers and students (if utilizing).
- Share pre-survey results with stakeholders.
- Administration to determine any procedural changes that need to be addressed as a result of the new policy.
- Communicate the new policy change with teachers and staff by sharing the letter and supporting documents.
- Consider phone storage options and determine what is the best fit.
- Hold an initial teacher/staff onboarding meeting.

## 2 Pre-Launch

(1 Month prior to launch)

- Email letters to parents and students announcing the new policy.
- Hold informational meeting with parents and students to address any questions or concerns.
- Have onboarding meeting with teachers/staff prior to implementation.
- Send communication reminder to students and parents about the new policy prior to the policy implementation.

## 3 Launch

(2+ Weeks)

- Have all hands on deck: administrators, counselors and staff are to be readily available to support students during the transition.
- Equip and support teachers regarding any pushback from students.

## 4 Post-Launch

(On-going)

- Continue meeting with teachers/staff to gather feedback and keep implementation on track .
  - The phone policy should be discussed at every staff meeting.
- Continue ongoing communication with students and parents on the implementation progress.
  - Communicate positive results and be available to answer questions or concerns .

## 5 Follow-up

(3-6 Months after Launch)

- Distribute post surveys to teachers and students.
- Continue ongoing communication with all stakeholders.

## 6 Review

- Share post-survey results with stakeholders.
- Discuss successes and areas to improve with staff.

# Implementation Guide

## HELPING YOU LAUNCH BELL-TO-BELL PHONE-FREE POLICIES WITH CONFIDENCE

Implementing a phone-free policy is not only doable—it's transformative. The Phone-Free Schools Movement (PFSM) is here to guide you every step of the way.

### 1 Creating a Robust Definition

#### PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT MODEL DEFINITION:

A phone-free school has a “**first bell to last bell**” policy that requires all personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, fitness trackers, and Bluetooth connected headphones, etc.) **are turned off, securely locked away, and inaccessible for the entire school day.**



### 2 Assessing Current Procedures

The implementation of a phone-free policy may require updates to existing procedures to ensure a smooth and effective transition. Regular assessment will help maintain safety, communication, and consistency throughout the school.

#### KEY AREAS TO EVALUATE AND ADJUST

##### Emergency Procedures

- Review and revise emergency protocols to ensure they remain effective without student cell phones.
- Assess whether additional landline or school-issued phones are needed throughout the building for staff use during emergencies.

**Parent/Student Communication**

- Establish a clear process for how parents can reach students during the school day in the event of an emergency or unexpected schedule change.
- Designate staff points of contact for urgent messages.

**Afterschool Program Communication**

- Define how changes to afterschool activities or transportation will be communicated to students without relying on personal phones.

**Classroom Audio Needs**

- Require wired headphones (no Bluetooth) for approved classroom activities.
- Clarify whether headphones will be provided by the school or need to be supplied by families.

**Policy Impact Tracking**

- Monitor and compare discipline referrals related to cell phone use before and after policy implementation.
- Use the data to evaluate policy effectiveness and identify areas needing refinement.

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## Setting Expectations for Exceptions

Exceptions must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders in advance in order to mitigate any parent concerns for children that have medical conditions that require the use of a cell phone. Documentation from a medical doctor must be provided to the school. This exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits use of the phone for any other purposes.

✕ **EXCEPTIONS WE DO NOT RECOMMEND:**

**Emergencies**

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO), recognized as the gold standard in school-based law enforcement training, emphasizes that for the safety and efficiency of emergency response, students should not use their phones during a lockdown. In critical situations such as an active shooter incident, phone use can inadvertently compromise safety by spreading misinformation, creating distractions, or revealing students' locations.

**Anxiety**

Mental health professionals warn that using a phone as a coping or avoidance tool can worsen anxiety and prevent children from developing the skills needed to manage more serious challenges later in life.

4

## Choosing Your Phone Storage Options

Research shows that even when phones are turned off or silenced, their mere presence can cause distraction and impact concentration. The most effective storage options are ones where phones are completely inaccessible to the student. Ensuring that phones are off and locked away eliminates the temptation for students to check notifications, scroll social media, communicate via text, watch videos and engage in other distractions. It also eliminates privacy violations that occur in the building, including locker rooms and restrooms where privacy is of utmost importance. Here are some effective storage options to consider:

## COST-EFFECTIVE STORAGE OPTIONS

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If budget is a concern, there are simple and affordable storage options.

**Pencil Pouches:** These zippered pouches can be labeled with the student's name and grade and stored in a classroom bin or locked drawer. Each morning, students deposit their phones and retrieve them at the end of the day.

**Envelopes:** Phones are stored in simple manila envelopes labeled with the student's name and grade and kept in a designated area, such as a classroom bin, or office, until the end of the day.

**Pros:** Inexpensive, easy to implement, and can be personalized.

**Challenges:** Requires teacher oversight and office space for storage.



## PHONE LOCKER SYSTEM

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Another option is to create a centralized storage area where students place their phones at the beginning of the day. These can be simple locked bins or cabinets.

**Pros:** Cost-effective, scalable for larger schools, and highly secure.

**Challenges:** Requires school-wide coordination and additional space.



## LOCKABLE POUCHES

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Lockable pouches such as [Yondr](#) are a popular choice for schools aiming to enforce bell-to-bell phone-free policies. The student stores their phone in the pouch, which remains locked until the end of the school day. PFSM recommends the pouches be stored in the students' lockers instead of their backpacks. This separation allows students to completely disengage from their phones.

**Pros:** Secure, durable, and easy to implement

**Challenges:** Requires teacher oversight, higher cost (\$30 per pouch)



✕ **STORAGE OPTIONS WE DO NOT RECOMMEND:**

**Personal Lockers**

Personal lockers can increase the burden on administrators and teachers, as they often lead to more frequent bathroom requests and the need for additional monitoring. Additionally, as this method does not usually involve direct staff oversight, it becomes difficult to verify whether students are complying with storage expectations.

**Backpacks**

Research indicates that the mere presence of a smartphone—regardless of whether it’s in use—can diminish a student’s ability to focus. Notably, studies have found that even when students report not consciously thinking about their phones, their cognitive performance still declines. This suggests that distraction occurs at an unconscious level, making it a persistent barrier to sustained attention and academic engagement.

5 **Establishing Clear Consequences**

Consequences must be strict in order for the policy to be effective.

- Consequences should be clearly outlined on an escalating scale based on the number of policy violations. Limit to 3 to 4 consequences as more can become cumbersome for administrators.
- Warnings should not be given prior to enforcing consequences.
- All consequences must require the cell phone be removed from the student.



We took a bold step to eliminate the distractions of cell phones in our middle school. While we expected significant pushback from parents, we were met with overwhelming support.

– Secondary Principal, PA



6 **Setting Standards for Enforcement**

**CONSISTENCY IS KEY**

- Uniform enforcement reduces pushback from students. If even one or two staff members allow phone use, it undermines the entire policy.
- Enforcement must remain consistent throughout the school year.

**STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Supervise students as they enter the school.
- Ensure phones are turned off and placed in the lockable storage system.

## EMPOWER TEACHERS & STAFF TO BE ROLE MODELS

While teachers and staff are not required to lock away their personal phones, they should:

- Be mindful of their role as models for students.
- Refrain from using phones during class time, in the hallways, and in the lunchroom.

## PLAN FOR A SMOOTH TRANSITION

The first few weeks will require increased administrative support to help students adapt.

- Some students may be deeply attached to their phones and could experience withdrawal-like symptoms.
- Provide additional emotional and behavioral support as needed during this adjustment period.

# 7

## Communicating to Your Stakeholders

The most successful implementations begin with messaging that is rooted in care and concern NOT restriction or punishment. Clear and consistent communication is essential to the successful implementation of any school-wide cell phone policy. All stakeholders—students, staff, parents, and the broader school community—must be informed and engaged before the policy goes into effect.

### BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

#### 1. Communicate the Policy Clearly

- Send letters and supporting documents to parents and caregivers.
- Use pre-designed social media posts to engage stakeholders and build awareness.

#### 2. Hold Presentations for Each Stakeholder Group

Include the following key points:

- The issues and challenges associated with student cell phone use during the school day.
- Research supporting the policy (e.g., impacts on brain development, mental health, academic performance).
- The importance of consistent, building-wide enforcement.
- Assurance that school administration will actively support staff in implementing the policy.
- Time for open discussion and Q&A.
- Highlight a success story from neighboring schools who have gone phone-free.

#### 3. Onboard Teachers and Staff Prior to Launch

Topics to cover:

- New procedures and expectations.
- Strategies for handling student and parent pushback.
- A review of consequences for non-compliance.

### AFTER IMPLEMENTATION

#### 1. Ongoing Communication with Staff

- Hold follow-up meetings with teachers and staff to:
  - Share feedback on what's working.
  - Clarify procedures.
  - Address any concerns or challenges.

#### 2. Keep Parents and Students Informed

- Provide regular updates on how the policy is being implemented.
- Reinforce the purpose and benefits of the policy to maintain buy-in.

## 8 Utilizing Surveys

A district/school may choose to survey their teachers and students to collect school specific data on the impact cell phones have on the educational environment prior to having the policy in place. They can subsequently conduct a post-survey after implementing the bell-to-bell phone-free policy for a semester or a year to assess its impact.

Interested in conducting more research on your new policy? Learn more about our School Research Program in the Resources Section of the Toolkit.

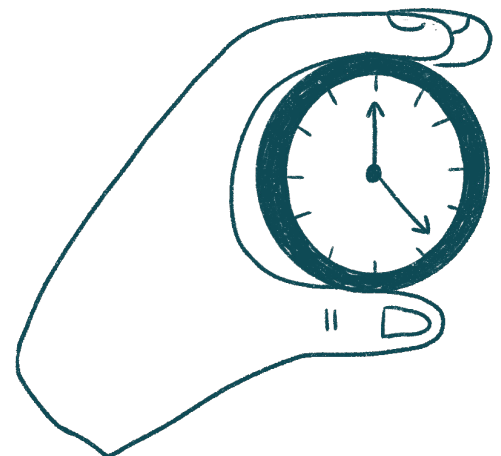
“ Student engagement is up, discipline referrals are down, and teacher satisfaction with the phone-free policy is off the charts.

– Superintendent, TX



## 9 Supplementing with Non-electronic Activities

Non-electronic activities help facilitate student interaction during free time and provide ways for them to interact off-line. It's important to encourage teachers/staff and students to celebrate the joys of genuine connection and partaking of truly fun and interactive practices that don't involve the downsides of social media.



# Model Phone-Free Policy

## PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT MODEL DEFINITION

A phone-free school has a “**first bell to last bell**” policy that requires all personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, fitness trackers, and Bluetooth connected headphones, etc.) **are turned off**, securely locked away, and inaccessible for the **entire school day**.

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## EXCEPTIONS

A school shall require documentation to support exemptions. The exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits the use for any other purposes.

- A student has a medical necessity, as determined by a healthcare professional, requiring the use of a cell phone to manage their condition. The cell phone must be used exclusively for this purpose.
  - When the possession or use of a personal electronic communication device is required by a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), or Section 504 Accommodations Plan.
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## CELL PHONE STORAGE OPTIONS *(please select one to include in your policy)*

- Phones are prohibited in the school
  - Cell phone locker
  - Lockable pouch (i.e. [Yondr](#) pouch)
  - Padded envelopes, pencil pouches, alphabetized baskets, or hanging calculator storage systems located in the main office, homerooms, or a secure location monitored by staff.
    - Consider conveying this notice: If you have concerns about phone security, we recommend leaving your cell phone at home.
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**Note: Research indicates that carrying a cell phone in a backpack or on your person is not effective.**

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## CONSEQUENCES

We suggest no warnings are given prior to enforcement of the consequences.

- 1st Offense: Cell phone is taken to the office and the student can pick it up from the office at the end of the school day.
  - 2nd Offense: Cell phone is taken to the office and the student's parent or guardian is required to pick it up from the office at the end of the school day. A copy of the cell phone policy can be provided to the family upon the return of the cell phone.
  - 3rd Offense: Cell phone is taken and kept until a parent meeting is scheduled and a plan is agreed upon on how to proceed for the rest of the school year.
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## ENFORCEMENT

The policy must be strictly enforced by all administration and staff school-wide.

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## PARENT/GUARDIAN/STUDENT COMMUNICATION

If parent/guardian/student need to communicate during the school day, a phone will be available in the main office *(or other designated area by the school)*. In addition, every classroom has a phone that is accessible for teachers to use to communicate.) **Note: If it is an emergency your student will be notified immediately.**





# Stakeholder Communications

## Includes:

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Supporting School Phone Policies at Home

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Smartphones and School Emergencies

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Frequently Asked Questions

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Responding to Concerns

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Social Media Posts

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Letters

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Surveys

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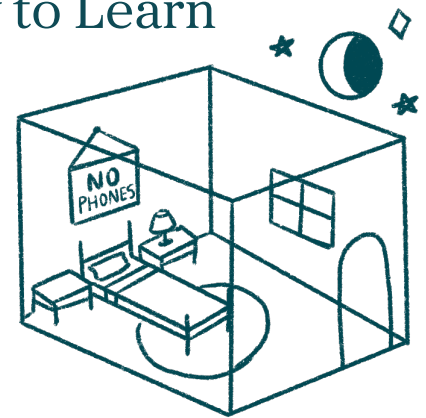
# Supporting School Phone Policies at Home

NO SMARTPHONES BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL.  
NO SOCIAL MEDIA BEFORE AGE 16.

A QUICK GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

## 1 Help Kids Stay Rested and Ready to Learn

Teens need at **least 8 hours of sleep** every night to support their brain development, emotional health, and ability to focus. Technology—especially social media—can interfere with both sleep quantity and quality.



### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Set a **"no phones in the bedroom"** rule.
- Power down screens **1 hour before bedtime**.

## 2 Talk About Social Media Use

Teens are wired for peer approval, but their self-control is still developing. Conversations and limits help create healthy habits.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Use **parental controls** to set **time limits** and **app restrictions**.
- Stay informed about the apps your child uses so you can **talk openly** about online safety and behavior.
- Discuss with your child how manipulative design is harmful to them, and the benefits of breaking free from the pull of social media to have time for offline activities.

## 3 Model Healthy Social Media Habits

Kids notice how adults use phones and model those behaviors. Being present shows them what healthy tech use looks like.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Avoid phone use during **meals or family activities**.
- Let your child see you **unplug regularly**.



## 4

## Watch for Signs of Problematic Use

Social media should **not interfere** with school, sleep, or real-life connections. Keep an eye out for warning signs like:

- Skipping schoolwork, activities, or sleep to be online
- Choosing social media over real-life social interactions
- Constant cravings to check apps
- Lying or sneaking around to use social media
- Wanting to quit but unable to stop

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- If you notice these behaviors, **set new boundaries.**
- If you're concerned about your child's mental health or behavior, **consider speaking with a mental health professional.**



## 5

## Teach Social Media Literacy

Kids need help understanding the content they see online. Teaching media literacy builds **critical thinking** and reduces harmful effects.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Use this **Social Media Literacy Guide** to start the conversation.

## 6

## Eliminate Tech Multitasking

Multitasking with tech while doing homework leads to **lower focus, reduced information retention, more mistakes, and slower progress.**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Have kids **turn off devices** during homework and study time.
- Set up **scheduled breaks** to check messages and social media if needed.



American Psychological Association. (n.d.). American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/topics/social-media-internet/health-advisory-adolescent-social-media-use>

# Smartphones and School Emergencies

NASRO, the national leader in school-based safety training, fully supports **bell-to-bell phone and social media-free policies** for grades K-12. This includes **no exceptions for emergencies**.

## Protecting Students Means Putting Phones Away in a Crisis



For the best outcome it is essential for students NOT to be on their phones during a lockdown. In a school emergency, such as an active shooter situation, phones can do more harm than good.

**Here's why:**

- 1. Students must focus on adult instructions.**  
During this critical time, students need to listen to the teacher and/or first responders for guidance. Messaging or calling their parents who are not in the building could distract students from life saving instructions.
- 2. Phones compromise hiding and lockdown efforts.**  
Noise and/or light from students' phone could alert an assailant to the location where students are hiding.
- 3. Emergency communication channels must stay clear.**  
If hundreds of students are calling their parents then the communication channels may be overwhelmed and impede necessary communication with first responders.
- 4. Parents rushing to school can delay emergency access.**  
If parents are alerted by students and rush to the school, the extra traffic could potentially block access routes for emergency response vehicles.
- 5. Crowds create confusion.**  
Parents rushing to the school can risk being mistaken as an assailant.
- 6. Schools are equipped to manage emergency communications.**  
Misinformation can quickly spread over social media. If students are texting and posting on social media during an emergency situation it could lead to a more hazardous situation.

## Beyond Emergencies: Phones Create Daily Safety Issues

NASRO also highlights that **phones and social media access during the school day contribute to:**

- Cyberbullying
- Privacy violations
- Fights and planned altercations
- Disruptions fueled by social media drama

These issues **significantly decrease** in schools that enforce bell-to-bell phone-free policies with **no access during lunch or passing periods**.



# Frequently Asked Questions

1

## Why is our school excited about adopting a phone-free policy?

We're glad to be joining the growing wave of schools in the U.S. and Canada going phone-free. The school day is when students need to be able to focus, learn, interact with each other, build in-person community, and engage with teachers. Study data shows that having a cell phone, even turned off in their backpack, decreases student test scores. A phone and social media free school gives students back many needed opportunities for development.

2

## What is included in a cell phone and personal electronic device definition?

- Cell phones (both phones that connect to the internet and non-internet connected phones that send and receive text messages, and make phone calls)
- Personal electronic devices such as electronic tablets and video games
- AirPods, earbuds and Bluetooth connected headphones
- Smartwatches and fitness trackers that connect to the internet

3

## What if my child needs their phone in case of a crisis or lockdown at the school?

School security experts say phones can make children less safe in crisis situations for the following reasons:

- **Students must focus on adult instructions.** Phones distract from life-saving guidance given by teachers or first responders.
- **Phones compromise hiding and lockdown efforts.** Light and sound from phones can reveal student locations to an assailant.
- **Emergency communication channels must stay clear.** Mass calls or texts can overwhelm networks, delaying first responder coordination.
- **Parents rushing to school can delay emergency access.** Traffic caused by concerned parents may block or slow emergency vehicle response.
- **Crowds create confusion.** More people near the building increase risks and may complicate identification of threats.
- **Schools are equipped to manage emergency communications.** Trained personnel handle information flow and reduce misinformation.

For more information: [National Association of School Resource Officers](#)



4

### **How do I contact my student during the school day?**

(i.e. schedule change, after-school activity)

Parents and/or guardians who need to contact their student during the school day and or change the pick-up time of your child, may do so by calling the main office. Contacting your child via their cell phone during the school day distracts them from their studies and the needed in-person interaction with their teachers and peers. By having 24/7 access, we prevent growth opportunities that our children need educationally, socially, and developmentally. If students text their parents every time they have a question, they miss the opportunity to think for themselves and develop problem solving skills.

5

### **What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?**

If the student needs to contact their parent or guardian during the school day, a phone will be available in the main office.

6

### **Why can't teachers be in charge of the class and collect the phones?**

Children need consistency and one policy for the entire school benefits all students. Teachers benefit by regaining classroom instructional time instead of having to police phones, as monitoring phones takes time and energy away from teaching and supporting students. If there is a consistently enforced building-wide policy in place then students are less likely to push back on the policy.

7

### **Why is it important to allow our children to be independent during the school day?**

Students need to be given independence from their parents or guardians during the school day to develop foundational skills. Constant contact can fuel a cycle of anxiety for both students and parents. Research shows encouraging independence fosters a child's self-confidence, resilience, problem-solving ability, and mental health.

8

### **What if my child has a medical condition that must be monitored by their cell phone?**

A school shall require documentation from a licensed medical professional to support an exemption such as diabetes or seizure monitoring. This exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits cell phone use for any other purposes.

9

### **What if my child has an IEP/504 plan?**

It is extremely rare for a cell phone to be required for an IEP/504 plan. But if the situation did arise, documentation is required and the exception is specific to the need only and still prohibits cell phone use for any other purposes.

10

### **Will it be harder for students to make connections and friends if they are offline all day?**

Social media tends to foster asynchronous interactions leading to greater levels of anxiety, loneliness, and depression. In-person socializing forms far stronger connections and supports the development of healthier social and emotional skills.

11

### **Don't some students benefit from having social media?**

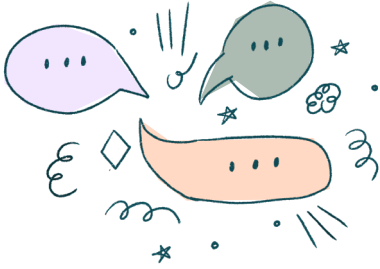
Even for students who use social media for connection and activism, it is still a distraction during school hours. As a school community, we work hard to foster a culture of inclusion. Our goal is to limit use during the school day to minimize disruption and mitigate the potential harms of social media dependency and exposure to harmful content.

12

### **Isn't it better to teach kids to use phones responsibly rather than take them away?**

Brain science research and expert psychiatrists say the adolescent brain is not able to manage the addictive pull of cell phones and social media. The social media platforms and games that young people spend much time on were deliberately designed to be addictive. Additionally, part of teaching responsible use is creating phone-free zones that help students understand that phones are a tool to be used at specific times in specific ways, rather than being something that is on and used 24/7.

# Responding to Concerns



## When a parent/student asks why the policy was changed or implemented:

Phones are a disruption to the school day. They disrupt focus, learning and engagement. They also create challenges such as cyberbullying, privacy violations, and mental health concerns for students. Implementing a phone-free policy leads to increased student engagement during class, meaningful connections with peers, higher test scores, fewer disciplinary incidents, reduction in cyberbullying, and improved school culture and community.

---

## When a parent/student states they need to have contact 24/7:

Parents and guardians who need to contact their student during the school day may do so by calling the main office number. If the student needs to contact their parent or guardian during the school day, a phone will be available in the main office. The same goes if you need to change the pick up time of your child. Contacting your child directly via their phone during the school day distracts them from their studies and the needed in-person interaction with their teachers and peers.



---

## When a parent states they need their phone in an emergency situation:

We understand the emotions that come into play during an emergency, however our number one priority is to ensure the safety of all staff and students. School security experts say phones can actually make children less safe in crisis situations:



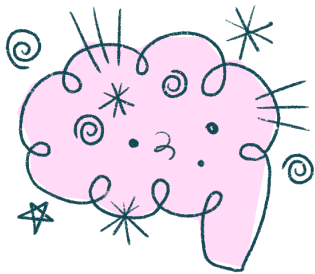
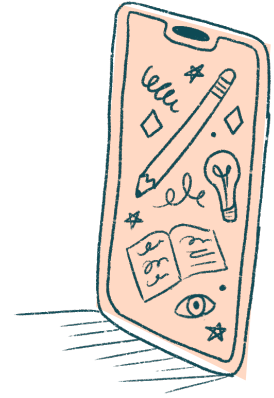
- Student use of cell phones during an unfolding emergency can distract their attention from safety and emergency response directions being given by school staff.
- Cell phone use by students can hamper rumor control and, in doing so, disrupt and delay effective public safety personnel response.
- Cell phone use by students can impede public safety response by accelerating parental and community arrival at the scene of an emergency during times when officials may be attempting to evacuate students to another site.
- Victims and worried family members trying to get through can jam communications, interfering with first responders.

***For more information: [National School Safety and Security Services](#)***



### When a student/parent claims the phone is needed for educational purposes:

The potential risks of using cell phones in the classroom outweigh the benefits. The district provides devices that are fully capable of handling all classwork and assignments. Staff will ensure that students are well-informed about the new process.

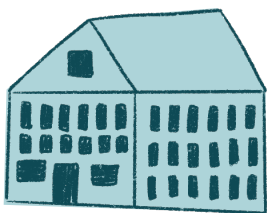


### When a parent/student states they or their child feels more stress and anxiety without their phone:

Constant notifications and texts lead to increased anxiety among adolescents. Face-to-face time with friends and classmates counteracts the isolating, depressive effects of looking at a screen. Teachers and staff (school counselors) are here to support your child through this transition.

### When a student/parent claims they or their child needs AirPods to listen to music for their anxiety:

We recognize that students may use their AirPods as a coping mechanism for anxiety. However, during the school day alternate coping strategies must be provided because the use of AirPods are prohibited.



### When a parent/student asks why can't we just eliminate phones during instructional time:

The social aspect of the school day is just as important as academics. Students need to build meaningful relationships and foster a sense of belonging within their community. By creating a phone-free environment, we restore essential opportunities for social development.

# Social Media Posts

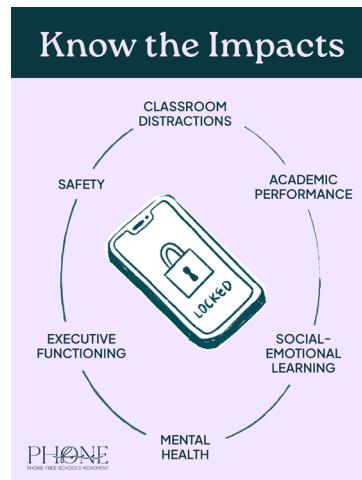
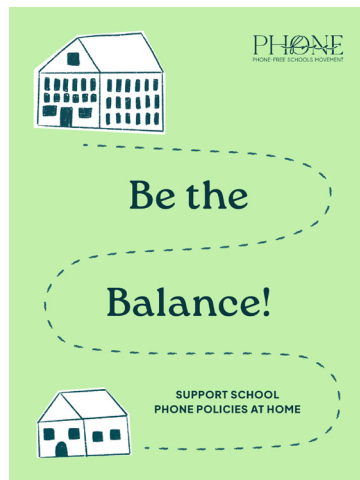
## ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

Community engagement is key to the success of a phone-free school day. To support your efforts, we've created a set of ready-to-use social media templates designed to help you educate, empower, and celebrate this important shift.

These posts can be customized to reflect your school's unique voice and community priorities. Use them to build understanding, gain support, and highlight the benefits of a more focused, distraction-free learning environment.

Let's work together to create healthier, more intentional spaces for student learning.

Download social media graphics and templates [here](#).



# New Policy Announcement Posts



Option 1



Option 2

## NEW POLICY ANNOUNCEMENT SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

Big News!

We're making an important shift to better support student focus, learning, and well-being. Beginning this school year, we'll be implementing a bell-to-bell phone-free policy.

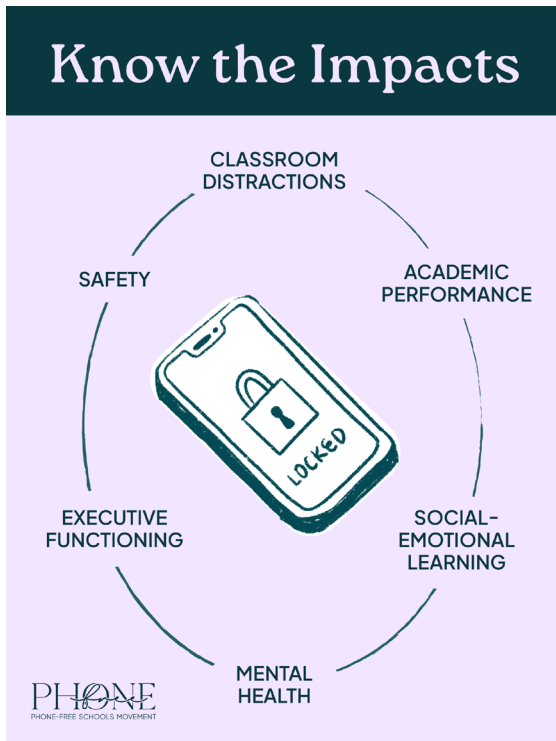
That means students will be expected to keep phones turned off and stored away during the entire school day. This change is backed by research, supported by educators nationwide, and designed to create a more engaged, respectful, and safe learning environment.

Together, we're creating a stronger school culture—one free from digital distractions.  
#PhoneFreeSchools #NewPolicy #BellToBell #StudentSuccess #AdminToolkit #FocusAndWellbeing #SchoolCultureMatters

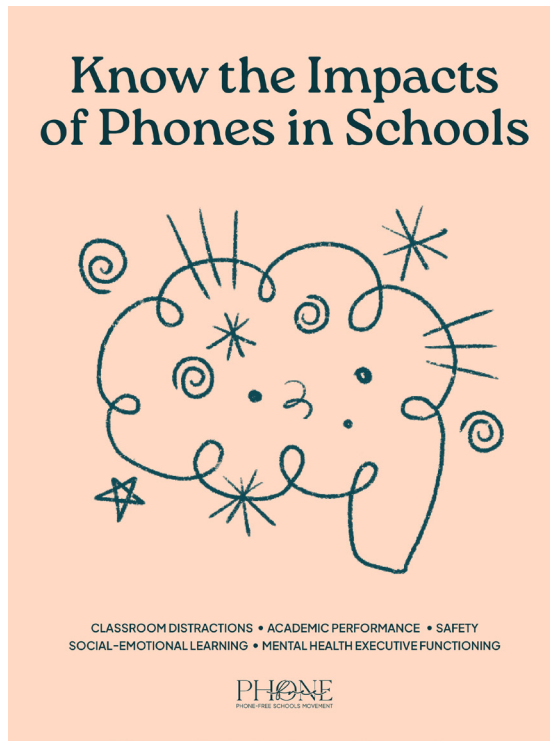
Download social media graphics [here](#)

# Know the Impacts of Phones in Schools

## Social Media Posts



Option 1



Option 2

### KNOW THE IMPACTS OF PHONES IN SCHOOLS SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

Phones aren't just a distraction—they impact everything from academic performance and safety to students' mental health and social-emotional learning.

Schools across the country are taking action with bell-to-bell phone-free policies—and the results are powerful.

Let's build learning environments where students can focus, connect, and thrive.

#PhoneFreeSchools #MentalHealthMatters #EducationFirst #StudentSuccess #ClassroomWellness #DigitalWellbeing

Download social media graphics [here](#)

# Supporting School Phone Policies at Home



Option 1



Option 2

## SUPPORTING SCHOOL PHONE POLICIES AT HOME SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

Support Starts at Home!

Phone-free schools work best when families reinforce healthy habits at home. From setting screen-free times to modeling balance, you play a powerful role in your child's success.

- Back up your school's phone policy
- Encourage real-world connection
- Join the growing movement for focus, safety, and student well-being

Let's build strong school-home partnerships for healthier learning environments—together.

#PhoneFreeSchools #ParentPower #HealthyHabits #DigitalWellbeing #SchoolSupport  
#ScreenTimeBalance #FamilyMatters

## FOR PARENT GROUPS / PTO / PTAS:

Be the Balance!

Support your school's phone policy by reinforcing healthy screen habits at home. From creating no-phone zones to leading by example, small steps at home make a big impact at school.

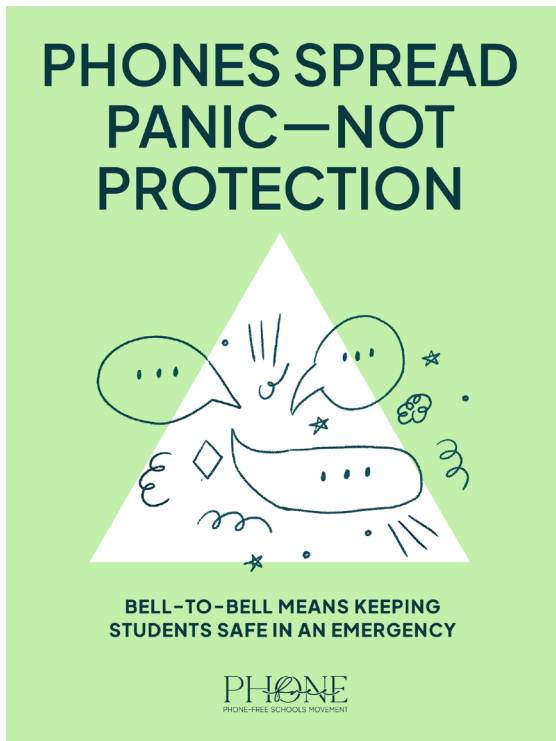
Join the Phone-Free Schools Movement and help our kids thrive!

#ParentPower #PhoneFreeSchools #FamilyFirst #ScreenSmart #PTOsupport

Download social media graphics [here](#)

# Smartphones and School Emergencies

## Social Media Posts



Option 1



Option 2

### SMARTPHONES AND SCHOOL EMERGENCIES SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

In an Emergency, Seconds Matter.

Phones don't protect students during a crisis—they distract, overwhelm communication lines, and can even put lives at risk.

Lockdowns require silence.

Students need to follow adults' directions.

First responders need open, clear channels.

That's why bell-to-bell phone-free policies matter.

Let's protect what matters most: student safety.

Join the movement → [[www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](http://www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)]

#PhoneFreeSchools #SchoolSafety #CrisisPreparedness #EmergencyResponse #StudentWellbeing

Download social media graphics [here](#)

# Frequently Asked Questions Social Media Posts



Option 1



Option 2

## FAQS SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

Have questions about phone-free school policies? You're not alone. We know many parents have important questions about how phone-free policies work—and why they matter. From emergencies to learning support, we've compiled answers to the most common concerns in one place.

What about emergencies?  
Will my child still be able to reach me?  
How will this affect learning?

Our FAQ page is here to help you feel informed and confident about what this means for your child. Tap the link in bio or visit: [[www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org/faq](http://www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org/faq)]

Still have questions? Reach out anytime at [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org).

Let's partner together to support student focus, safety, and well-being.

#PhoneFreeSchools #ParentSupport #DigitalWellbeing #FAQs #SchoolCommunity  
#PartnerWithParents #EducationMatters

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Download social media graphics [here](#)

# All Day is the Way Social Media Posts



Option 1



Option 2

## ALL DAY IS THE WAY SOCIAL MEDIA POST CAPTION:

The research is clear: partial phone policies don't work. When students have access—even at lunch or between classes—the distractions, drama, and digital pressures don't stop.

That's why we support bell-to-bell phone-free policies that prioritize focus, safety, and connection from the first bell to the last.

Let's give students the freedom to learn and grow—without the screen time in between.

Learn more: [www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](http://www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)

Reach out anytime: [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)

#AllDayIsTheWay #PhoneFreeSchools #DigitalWellbeing #EducationMatters #StudentSuccess  
#BellToBellPolicy #SchoolCultureChange #PhoneFreeDay

Download social media graphics [here](#)

# Letters to Teachers and Staff

Download the editable letter [here](#)

Dear Teachers and Staff,

We're glad to have the opportunity to join the growing number of schools in the US and Canada which are now phone-free. Cell phones have undoubtedly changed the world we live in, including the landscape of education. The ubiquitous nature of phones and addictive algorithms have created unprecedented challenges for educators as we try to navigate our digital world. For students they have sparked a mental health crisis and contributed to learning and social emotional deficiencies. We know that you've been working hard to keep students' attention in the face of many distractions and recognize policing phones should not be your burden to bear alone.

As educators we have the ability to positively impact the lives of the children we serve. We are mentors, leaders and role models leaving a lasting mark on our students. Providing a healthy community where students can learn the academic, social and emotional skills needed to transition to healthy, happy and thriving adults has always been at the core of our school community and our role as educators.

Phones have impaired our ability to provide a positive, inclusive, and safe environment for all students where learning, focus, community and belonging are prioritized. The presence of personal devices such as cell phones, earbuds and smartwatches has undermined the educational experience, and the core values we strive to uphold.

**Our job has always been—and will continue to be—to prioritize the education, safety, and well-being of our students. In alignment with this commitment, we will be implementing a bell-to-bell phone-free school policy, requiring all student phones to be turned off and securely stored for the entire school day.**

In some cases, this shift also reflects new state-mandated guidelines aimed at reducing digital distractions and promoting healthier learning environments. Schools that have implemented all day policies are seeing positive classroom changes such as increased focus, attention, comprehension, engagement, less cheating and improved academic performance. Additionally, teachers and staff report enhanced face-to-face peer interactions, reduced cyberbullying, fewer fights and a decrease in social media-induced drama. Students also experience less stress and anxiety.

Our teachers and staff play an integral role in this community, and as administrators we are committed to supporting you by addressing the constant class disruptions and discipline issues caused by cell phones. We see this as a crucial, much needed pivot, and we hope it helps you recover focus, connection, and joy in your classroom.

Sincerely,

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Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. [afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools](https://afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools)



# Letter to Parents

Download the editable letter [here](#)

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Technology has undoubtedly changed the landscape of parenting and education. It has created many opportunities, as well as unprecedented challenges for parents and educators as we try to navigate our new world. For students it has sparked a mental health crisis, fractured attention spans and contributed to a wave of learning and social emotional deficiencies.

As educators we strive to impact the lives of our students in positive ways. We serve as mentors, guides and inspirations. Providing a healthy community where students can learn the academic, social and emotional skills needed to transition to healthy, happy and thriving adults has always been at the core of our school community and our role as educators.

Phones have impaired our ability to provide a positive, inclusive and safe environment for all students where learning, focus, safety, community and belonging are prioritized. The presence of personal devices such as cell phones, earbuds and smartwatches has undermined the educational experience and the core values we strive to uphold.

**Our jobs have been, and always will be, to put the education and well-being of our students above all else and therefore we will be moving to a bell-to-bell phone-free school policy. This means that phones must be turned off and stored away for the entire school day.** Schools that have implemented all day policies are seeing positive classroom changes such as increased focus, attention, comprehension, engagement, less cheating and improved academic performance. Additionally, teachers and staff report enhanced face-to-face peer interactions, reduced cyberbullying, fewer fights, and a decrease in social media-induced drama. Students also experience less stress and anxiety.

Attached please find our new phone-free policy. We know you may have some questions or concerns, so we are including important information that will help make this a smooth transition and ease any concern you may have. We also understand that there will be situations when you need to contact your child during the school day. Parents and guardians can call the main office to have a message delivered to their student. Please note there are also exceptions for students that require a cell phone for medical needs.

We are excited to move forward with this shared mission to provide the best educational experience possible for our students. As parents and guardians you are a vital piece of our community, and we look forward to working together to create the healthy academic and social environment all of our students deserve.

Sincerely,

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Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. [afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools](https://afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools)



# Letter to Students

Download the editable letter [here](#)

Dear Students,

As your educators and leaders it is our job to provide a healthy and safe community where all students are given the freedom to thrive.

Technology has provided us with many benefits. For some of you it has been a way to find community, social support and a connection to a diverse set of peers. For others it has become an important outlet for self-expression. But, technology has also brought challenges for our school community. The use of phones has impaired our ability to provide a positive, inclusive and safe environment for all students where learning, focus, safety, community and belonging are prioritized. The presence of personal devices such as cell phones, earbuds and smartwatches has undermined the culture of our school and the core values we strive to uphold.

Although we recognize the important role technology plays in your lives, we also know that time away from phones and social media is essential to healthy growth and good education. **With this in mind, we will be moving to a bell-to-bell phone-free school policy. This means that phones must be turned off and stored away for the entire school day.** We know this transition will pose some challenges and cause some discomfort, but we hope that you will quickly begin to experience its benefits both in your classes and in your social interactions.

I'm sure many of you will have questions or concerns, which we hope the attached information will cover. Transitions can be difficult but we are here to provide you with any support you may need. We welcome questions and encourage you to discuss this policy change with your administrators and/or teachers.

We are excited to move forward with this shared mission to provide the best educational experience possible for our students. As students you are a vital piece of our community, and we look forward to working together to create the healthy academic and social environment all of you deserve.

Sincerely,

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Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. [afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools](https://afterbabel.com/p/phone-free-schools)



# Teacher Survey

This survey seeks to establish a foundational understanding of our teachers' experiences regarding the impact of cell phones on student learning, engagement, and health. The initial data will serve as a baseline to gauge the changes that occur once a phone-free policy is implemented.

Please take 5 minutes to complete this survey. Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help us measure the impact of the new policy and track the positive changes we hope to achieve.

*Copy/paste the questions below into survey software of choice*

- 1) **Do you think your school has an effective phone-free policy?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. No policy implemented
- 2) **Do you have your students utilize their cell phones for educational purposes?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Other
- 3) **If yes- Can these activities be accomplished on a school issued device?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 4) **Do you allow your students to utilize their cell phones for personal use?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 5) **Do you agree with the statement "I spend a disproportionate amount of class time policing phones"?**
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
- 6) **The presence of smartphones in the classroom has decreased your enjoyment of your role as a teacher:**
  - a. Strongly disagree
  - b. Disagree
  - c. Agree
  - d. Strongly agree
- 7) **Have you noticed a decrease in students' academic performance since students have had access to their cell phones during the school day?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 8) **Do you feel that cellphone use in the classroom has impacted your students' attention, curiosity, and interest in the material they are learning?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 9) **Do students, to the best of your knowledge, use their cell phone to cheat in class?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 10) **Do students, to the best of your knowledge, use their cell phone to violate the privacy of others?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 11) **Do students, to the best of your knowledge, access inappropriate content on their cell phones?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 12) **Have you ever been recorded by a student on their cell phone?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No



# Student Survey

This survey seeks to establish a foundational understanding of our students' experiences regarding the impact of cell phones on your learning, engagement, and health. Please take 5 minutes to complete this survey. All responses will remain anonymous.

*Copy/paste the questions below into survey software of choice*

- 1) **Do your teachers encourage you to utilize your cell phone for educational purposes?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 2) **If yes- Can these activities be accomplished on a school issued device?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 3) **Do you utilize your cell phone for personal use during class?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 4) **Do you feel like it's difficult to ignore your phone during instructional time?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Sometimes
- 5) **Do you utilize your phone to fill free time at school (after assignments, lunch, in between classes, free blocks, etc.)?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Sometimes
- 6) **Does it take you longer to complete assignments in class because of access to your cell phones?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not Applicable
- 7) **Do you think your academic performance would improve if you didn't have access to your cell phone?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 8) **Have you ever used your cell phone to cheat or used it to help another student cheat?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 9) **Have you ever had an unwanted recording or photograph taken of you by another student with their cell phone?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 10) **Have you ever accessed or been exposed to inappropriate content on a cell phone during the school day?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 11) **Have you ever been cyberbullied during school hours?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 12) **Have cell phones impacted your ability to engage in face-to-face conversation with your peers?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 13) **Have you ever sent or received nudes during school hours?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 14) **Have you used your phone to access drugs or vapes during school hours?**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No





# Additional Resources

## Includes:

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Research Program

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Our Ongoing Support

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Final Thoughts

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# Research Program



WINSTON NATIONAL CENTER  
ON TECHNOLOGY USE, BRAIN, AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT



UNC  
GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

## Evaluating and Understanding the Impacts of Phone Restriction Policies

The Phone-free Schools Movement has partnered with a team of researchers from UNC Chapel Hill to create a research arm dedicated to evaluating and understanding the impacts of phone restriction policies. This team is composed of scholars from the UNC School of Global Public Health (Dr. Karl Johnson), as well as the UNC Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Winston National Center on Technology Use, Brain, and Psychological Development (Drs. Mitch Prinstein, Eva Telzer, Kaitlyn Burnell, Annie Maheux). Collectively, these researchers have extensive background in adolescent neurodevelopment, the impact of media devices on child well-being, and program evaluation.



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### WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE?

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Schools that have implemented or are interested in implementing a phone restriction policy and wish for that policy to be rigorously evaluated, or are interested in gathering related data (e.g., student wellness, student perceptions of resource availability, parent attitudes and concerns) are encouraged to participate. While we are especially interested in working with entire school districts, we are also open to discussing partnerships with individual schools.

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### WHAT WE CAN PROVIDE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

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We can provide a timely analysis of school results, through both written materials and through presentations given to a variety of stakeholders. In addition to presenting school-specific results, we can provide presentations to students, teachers, and families on the scientific research relevant to digital technology use. These presentations can be conducted in-person or virtually. We are fully committed to mutually beneficial partnerships, and we are open to ideas from partnering schools on other ways we can assist their community.

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## WHAT WE NEED FROM PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

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Our research is conducted in partnership with school districts and communities to ensure we are collecting data most applicable and helpful to each context. All of our consent and data collection materials are freely available to partnering school districts to offer feedback and revision as needed. We are able to present the de-identified results of our work to the scientific community and to the school district/community, staff, faculty, students, and families as desired. We present group level aggregate results. We are not able to share the results of any individual participants due to strict confidentiality restrictions.



### **THIS PROGRAM IS OFFERED AT NO COST TO PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS/DISTRICTS**

For schools interested in participating in child-centered research, in which surveys are administered directly to students, we must obtain parental consent. This can be done electronically. We also can collect data from participants electronically, using online surveys. Data must be collected from students themselves, and our consent form asks parents to allow us to access school records for their child.

To collect consent, it is necessary to be able to contact all families (either directly or via school personnel) within the grades that are selected for participation. Sometimes numerous contacts are necessary to successfully get responses either granting or denying consent. Study conclusions typically are not valid unless approximately 70% of families participate. To collect data, it is important for youth to have about an hour of protected time (at school or home) during which they can complete surveys on a device that allows them to concentrate and answer our questions seriously. We review these questions with school personnel in advance of data collection so we are certain that the research will meet district goals.

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## HOW DO INTERESTED SCHOOLS SIGN UP?

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We ask that interested schools fill out our interest form. After the form has been completed, members of the UNC research team will contact you to learn more about your school's needs and current policies.

An initial consultation with members of the research team does not commit the school to conduct an evaluation, though participation in an evaluation will require some level of participation on behalf of school leaders.

**Sign up here to receive  
a free consultation!**



# Our Ongoing Support

## Phone-Free Schools Movement: Supporting School Leaders Every Step of the Way

Creating a phone-free learning environment can feel overwhelming — but you don't have to go it alone. The Phone-Free Schools Movement (PFSM) team is here to walk alongside school leaders, step by step, providing clarity, support, and actionable solutions from planning to implementation and beyond.

Whether you're just starting the conversation or ready to roll out a policy, **we're here to help.**

## What We Offer

### ADMINISTRATOR RESOURCES

- **Ongoing Support** – Our team is available to answer questions, offer district-level examples, and provide one-on-one guidance as you roll out your policy.
- **Webinar Series** – Live sessions featuring implementation strategies, lessons learned, and expert interviews tailored for administrators and policymakers.
- **Research Partnerships** – Collaboration with the University of North Carolina (UNC) to study the impact of phone-free schools and validate results with data.

## Our New Community Platform: PFSM Circle

A private space for members to connect, share ideas, and collaborate.

- **Community Connection** – Join parents, administrators, advocates, and legislators from across the country.
- **Peer-to-Peer Support** – Share experiences, troubleshoot challenges, and support others in implementation.
- **State-Specific Channels** – Collaborate with others in your state, especially where legislation has passed.

## Let's Work Together

We walk alongside school leaders step by step — so you're never left wondering what comes next.

Reach out to us anytime: [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)

A powerful Hub for Administrators: To access these resources and more please visit:  
[phonefreeschoolsmovement.org/AdministratorHub](https://phonefreeschoolsmovement.org/AdministratorHub)



## Final Thoughts

All students deserve a phone-free educational environment where they are free to learn, free to engage, and free to thrive without the distractions of phones and social media.

We hope the Administrator Toolkit streamlines the implementation process in your school/district. If executed with fidelity and consistency throughout the school year, the result will be a more focused, positive and enriching learning environment for all students.

We are dedicated to providing ongoing support and resources as you navigate this process. Should you have any questions or need assistance, please contact us via email at [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org).



The Phone-Free Schools Movement is dedicated to enhancing academic excellence and social development by eliminating the distractions and negative effects of phones and social media in K-12 education. The nonprofit's comprehensive understanding of current policies, school climates and the harms of excessive phone use establishes them as a trusted resource for creating healthier school environments where students can fully engage and flourish.



Fairplay is the leading nonprofit committed to helping children thrive in an increasingly commercialized, screen-obsessed culture and the only organization dedicated to ending marketing to kids. Fairplay works to enhance children's well-being by eliminating the exploitative and harmful business practices of marketers and Big Tech. We are a truly independent voice for children – Fairplay does not accept donations from Big Tech or any corporation.