Phone-Free Schools Administrator Toolkit

Tools to implement a phone-free school environment.

PHONE free
PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

+

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Introduction

Adopting a phone-free school policy is one of the most impactful steps you can take to enhance student educational outcomes, behavior and wellbeing. Feedback from teachers, parents, and students in phone-free schools has been overwhelmingly positive. However, it is important to anticipate some initial resistance to this policy change. 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.

Phone-Free Schools Movement

Sabine S. Polak
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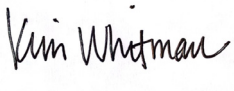

Kim Whitman
Co-founder

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What's Included

Supporting Data

SECTION 1:

Research Infographic
Benefits

Implementation Materials

SECTION 2:

Rollout Timeline
Implementation Guide
Model Phone-Free Policy

Stakeholder Communications

SECTION 3:

Frequently Asked Questions
Common Pushbacks
Letters
Surveys

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

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Supporting Data

SECTION 1:

Research Infographic

Benefits

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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

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

TEENS SPEND NEARLY FIVE HOURS A DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA APPS

American Psychological Association

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

NEA Poll

83% OF TEACHERS

support an all day phone-free policy

National Education Association

72%

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

The Mere Presence of a Cell Phone May be Distracting

50%+

of kids get 237 NOTIFICATIONS PER DAY

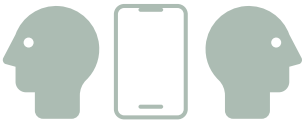
Some receive as many as

4,500

EVERY DAY!

23% occur during school

Common Sense Media



Phones prevent face to face communication

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

Psychology today

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

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

RATES OF SCHOOL LONELINESS HAS DOUBLED SINCE 2012

Worldwide Increases in Adolescent Loneliness

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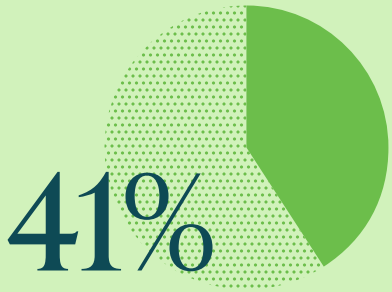
SINCE 2010

134% ↑
Increase in anxiety

106% ↑
Increase in depression

The Anxious Generation



41%

OF TEENS WITH THE HIGHEST SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor

American Psychological Association

35%

of teens admit to using their cellphone to

CHEAT

Common Sense Media

22%

of high school students have **SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR**

10%

HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR

CDC, 2023

Adolescents who experienced cyberbullying were more than

FOUR TIMES

as likely to report thoughts of

SUICIDE AND 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

STEEP DROP IN BULLYING

46% of girls & **43%** 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

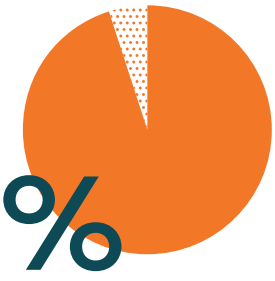
Common Sense Media

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 IS A PROBLEM IN PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS

National Education Association

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

"BRAIN DRAIN"

The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity

Brain Drain

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Benefits of Phone-Free Policy

Phone-Free Schools Movement's in depth discussions with administrators who have effectively implemented phone-free policies have consistently highlighted the same positive outcomes. Below are some of the tangible benefits noted by these administrators:

- **Less distractions:** Teachers report improved focus, attention and comprehension leading to better skills and grades.
- **Less cyberbullying**
- **Fewer fights and social media related drama:** Administrators report spending less time on discipline referrals.
- **Increased engagement:** Students engage more with their peers and teachers both in and outside of the classroom.
- **Improved attendance:** Students aren't texting their parents to call them out of school
- **Boosted efficiency:** Teachers report being ahead of schedule on their lesson plans because they aren't spending time policing phones, and because students are completing classwork and assignments faster.
- **More reading:** Phone-free schools report an increase in books checked out from their libraries.
- **Improved teacher morale and retention**
- **Less mid-class absenteeism:** Students request to use the restroom less frequently and trips to the restroom are shorter because students aren't using that time to be on their phones.
- **More vibrant lunchrooms:** Lunchrooms at phone-free schools are markedly louder because students are having face-to-face conversations with their peers.
- **Less cheating**
- **Less reported stress among students:** School counselors are seeing a decrease in the rate of mental health related student visits.

In summary, a bell-to-bell phone-free policy provides students with an average of 7 hours each school day to be fully present and free from the pressures and harms of phones and social media. This policy helps them restore connections and reclaim a critical period in their development.

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Implementation Materials

SECTION 2:

Rollout Timeline

Implementation Guide

Model Phone-Free Policy

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Rollout Timeline

1 Planning (2+ months)

- 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
- Letter communicating the new policy and supporting documents are shared with teachers/staff
- Initial teacher/staff onboarding meeting

2 Pre-Launch (1 month)

- 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
- Ongoing communication with students and parents on the implementation
    - 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
- Ongoing communication with all stakeholders

6 Review

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

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Implementation Guide

Policy

The policy must be from first bell to last bell (all-day) in order to maximize the benefits for students, teachers, staff and administrators. An instructional time only policy is ineffective because:

- Access to cell phones any time during the school day allows students to organize fights, record others, cyberbully, focus on social media interactions and share inappropriate content.
- Cell phones not only disrupt academic learning, but social emotional learning as well. The use of cell phones during lunch, passing periods and free time prevents students from engaging with their peers and creating a sense of community.
- Cell phones create an additional burden on teachers who have to police cell phone use in their classroom when the policy isn't building wide.

The cell phone must be turned off and locked away and cannot be on the student. Removing phones from the person eliminates the urge 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.

For example school policies please visit www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org.

> "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

Definition

The definition of cell phone must include all of the following:

- Phones (both phones that connect to the internet and non-internet connected phones that send and receive text messages and make phone calls).
- Airpods, earbuds and Bluetooth connected headphones.
    - Decrease engagement in the classroom as well as with peers.
    - Unwired headphones are easily hidden by hair or clothing.
    - Students can easily connect their Bluetooth devices from a phone that is locked away.
- Smartwatches, fitness trackers and other accessories that connect to the internet.

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.

Communication

The policy must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders prior to implementation.

- Provide letters to stakeholders, along with supporting documents
- A presentation to each stakeholder group:
    - Explain the problems and concerns of cell phones during the school day
    - Share the research (brain development, mental health, academics)
    - Explain building wide enforcement is key to the success of the policy
    - Communicate that administration is there to reinforce the policy and support teachers/staff
    - Provide ample time for Q & A

- Teacher and staff onboarding meetings prior to policy launch
    - Changes in procedures
    - Handling student and parent pushback
    - Review of consequences

Provide communication to stakeholders after the policy rollout.

- Provide follow-up opportunities with teachers and staff after the policy is in place
    - Discuss feedback on procedures
    - Address questions and concerns
- Provide intermittent updates on policy implementation to parents and students

Storage Options

Storage options for cell phone:

- Lockable phone lockers (readily available from different manufacturers online)
    - Located in the main office, homerooms, last period classroom, or a secure location monitored by staff
    - Accessible only by staff during the school day (students do not have a key)
- Yondr pouch - Yondr is a lockable pouch where students store their individual phones. When the student enters the school, phones must be turned off prior to locking it in the pouch. The pouch is then stored in the students backpack or locker for the entire school day. When the student leaves school, they unlock their cell phone on the unlocking device mounted by the exit doors or in the main office.
- Low cost options include padded envelopes or pencil pouches stored in alphabetized baskets or hanging calculator storage systems.
    - Located in the main office, homerooms, last period classroom or a secure location monitored by staff

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

Note: Personal lockers are not recommended because the students can still access their cell phone between classes. Teachers have reported students asking to use the restroom during class in order to access cell phones stored in their personal lockers.

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.

Enforcement

The policy must have 100% participation by all staff in order for it to be effective. For this reason, providing staff the research that supports the policy and allowing them to voice questions is essential (refer to research infographic).

Building wide enforcement by all teachers, staff and administrators is also essential to the policy's success.

- Consistency leads to less pushback by students. If one or two staff members allow students to use their phones, then it erodes the policy and renders it ineffective.
- Enforcement must remain consistent for the entire school year.

Staff must supervise students as they enter the school, turn off their phone and place it in the lockable storage system.

Although teachers and staff are not required to lock away their own cell phones, they should be mindful that they serve as role models to the students and should refrain from using their phones during class time, as well as in the hallways and lunchroom.

The first couple of weeks of the policy will require extra attention by the administrators to help students transition to the new norm. Some students are extremely connected to their phone and will experience withdrawal symptoms that may require extra support.

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.

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.

- Some examples include card games, board games, ping pong tables

Assess Current Procedures

Procedures may require adjustment in response to implementing the phone-free policy.

- Evaluate emergency procedures to ensure they align with new policy.
    - Additional phones may be needed throughout the school building for emergency communications.
- If headphones are required for classroom activities, they should be wired, and provided by the school or parents.
- Tracking discipline referrals that involve a cell phone pre and post policy implementation is suggested.

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Model Phone-Free Policy

Cell phones and personal electronic device definition

- Cell phones (both phones that connect to the internet and non-internet connected cell phones that send and receive text message and make phone calls)
- Personal electronics devices such as tablets and video games
- Airpods, earbuds, Bluetooth connected headphones
- Smartwatches, fitness trackers and other accessories that connect to the internet

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.

Cell phone storage options *(please select one to include in your policy)*

- Phones are prohibited in the school
- Cell phone locker
- 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
    - If you have concerns about phone security, we recommend leaving your cell phone at home.

Note: Research indicates that carrying a cell phone in a backpack or on your person is not effective.

Consequences

No warnings 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.

Enforcement

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

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.

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Stakeholder Communications

SECTION 3:

Frequently Asked Questions

Common Pushbacks

Letters

Surveys

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q1

Why is our school adopting a phone-free policy?

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.

Q2

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

Q3

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:

- 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***

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Q4

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.

Q5

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.

Q6

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.

Q7

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.

Q8

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.

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Q9

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.

Q10

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.

Q11

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.

Q12

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.

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Common Pushbacks

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***

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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.

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Letter to Teachers and Staff

Download the editable letter here

Dear Teachers and Staff,

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 jobs have been, and always will be, to put the education and wellbeing 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.

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,

Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. 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.

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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,

Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. 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,

Haidt, J. (June 06, 2023). The Case for Phone-Free Schools. *After Babel*. 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

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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

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Conclusion

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.

What's Next

Once you have successfully implemented a phone-free policy in your school, please apply to be recognized by PFSM as a Phone-Free School. Recognized schools receive a Certificate and Seal of Recognition to display on their website, school communications, etc. Your school will also be added to our growing directory of phone-free schools nationwide. Please visit www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org to fill out an application.

INFO@PHONEFREESCHOOLSMOVEMENT.ORG
PHONEFREESCHOOLSMOVEMENT.ORG

PHONE free
PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

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.

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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 wellbeing 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.