

Port Jefferson Union Free School District

Smartphone/Electronic Device Plan 2025-2026

Recognizing the necessity of ensuring safe and productive learning environments for students and educators, Governor Hochul advanced legislation to create a statewide standard for distraction-free school environments and secured its passage in the FY2026 budget. New York is now the most populous state in the U.S. with a statewide, bell-to-bell restriction.

Governor Hochul's smartphone policy creates a model standard including:

- No unsanctioned use of smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices on school grounds in K-12 schools for the entire school day (from "bell to bell"), including classroom time and other settings like lunch and study hall periods.
- Requiring schools to give parents a way to contact their children during the day when necessary.
- Requiring schools to annually publish a report detailing the enforcement of the policy they adopted, helping to prevent inequitable discipline.

To accomplish the Governor's goal, the Port Jefferson UFSD worked collaboratively to create a plan that promotes an academic environment free from the distractions of personal electronic devices and that supports student engagement, focus and responsible behavior.

Research Supporting The District's Smartphone Plan

Numerous studies have shown that smartphone use in schools significantly disrupts learning, impedes attention and negatively impacts academic performance. According to research published by the London School of Economics, schools that implemented strict mobile phone protocols saw test scores improve by an average of 6.4%, with the most substantial gains observed among low-achieving students. The American Psychological Association has also highlighted that even the mere presence of a smartphone can reduce working memory and attention during tasks. Additionally, constant access to smartphones contributes to increased anxiety and sleep disruption in adolescents. By limiting smartphone use during the school day, educators can create a focused, respectful environment that supports academic achievement and social development, while helping students build healthier habits around technology use.

Promoting the District's Smartphone Plan

- All students and families will be notified of the District's Cell Phone Plan:
 - ParentSquare Messaging during the Summer of 2025

- Presentation at the August Board of Education Meeting
- School Website
- Classroom discussions on the first day of school
- Town Hall Meetings with Administrators

Protocols

- Elementary School
 - No smartphones or electronic devices permitted without the express written consent of the Building Principal
- Middle School/High School
 - Smartphones and other internet-enabled personal devices (including smart watches, airpods, earbuds, etc...) must be turned off and placed in each student's locker for the duration of the school day.
 - Please note, this includes non-instructional areas (hallways, lunchroom, etc.)

Enforcement of the Plan (Instructional Areas) - MS/HS

- Notification of this plan serves as a warning for all students
- Therefore, if a teacher sees a smartphone or electronic devices out during class time, the following will occur:
 - First Violation
 - Teacher documents the incident
 - Teacher contacts the parent/guardian to notify them of the violation.
 - Student is reminded of the protocol
 - Second Violation:
 - Teacher documents the repeat offense
 - Student is assigned a detention from 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM the following school day
 - Teacher notifies administration for tracking and detention assignment
 - After serving (2) two detentions for smartphone/electronic device infractions
 - A plan will be created that includes the student depositing the smartphone/electronic device in the Main Office upon entry to the building (for a minimum of one month). Student may retrieve the phone at the conclusion of their school day.

Enforcement of the Plan (Non-Instructional Areas) - MS/HS

- Notification of this plan serves as a warning for all students
- Therefore, if a staff member sees a smartphone/electronic device, the following will occur:
 - First Violation

- Staff documents the incident on the shared Google Sheet
- Admin contacts the parent/guardian to notify them of the violation
 - Student/Parent/Guardian is reminded of the District plan
- Second Violation:
 - Staff documents the repeat offense on the shared Google Sheet
 - Admin contacts parent
 - Student is assigned a detention from 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM the following school day (regardless of any after school commitment the student may have)
- After serving (2) two detentions for smartphone/electronic device infractions
 - A plan will be created that includes the student depositing the smartphone/electronic device in the Main Office upon entry to the building (for a minimum of one month). Student may retrieve the phone at the conclusion of their school day.

Detention Procedures - MS/HS

- Detentions will be supervised and held on campus in a designated room
- Students will be expected to complete academic work or reflective activities during this time
- Failure to attend detention will result in additional consequences (e.g., additional detentions, parent conference with administration and/or in-school suspension)

Documentation & Tracking - MS/HS

- A shared tracking system (Google Sheet) will be used by staff and administration to:
 - Log Smartphone/electronic device violations
 - Ensure consistent communication with families
 - Clarify the number of offenses

Parent/Guardian Communication - MS/HS

- Communication home will include:
 - Date of incident
 - Location (classroom or non-instructional area)
 - Explanation of the District Plan
 - Details of any assigned consequences

Notes:

*Exceptions for medical or documented educational needs must be arranged through the school administration in advance

*Phones in each Main Office will be available for student use throughout the day. Parent/Guardians may call the Main Office of their child's school to speak with their child.

*Each building will seek out opportunities to enhance the social experience for students during their lunch periods. This could include additional board games and activities at the middle school and high school levels and recess at the high school level.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to our students, families, teachers and staff for their cooperation and support in implementing the District's Smartphone/Electronic Device Plan. Your partnership is essential in creating a focused, respectful and engaging learning environment for all students. By working together to reduce distractions and promote positive habits around technology, we are helping our children succeed both academically and socially. We appreciate your commitment to this effort and look forward to continued collaboration in fostering a school culture that prioritizes learning and student well-being.