



Brighter Together

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New Cell Phone Policy for the 2025–2026 School Year

Dear Parents, Guardians, Students, and Staff

We hope this letter finds you well and that you're already enjoying a safe and restful summer. As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we are writing to inform you about important changes to our policy on student use of personal electronic devices during the school day. These changes come as a result of new legislation passed by New York State (Education Law Section 2803), which mandates that all schools adopt clear policies restricting the use of internet-enabled devices on school grounds during the instructional day. North Syracuse Central School District is committed to creating an engaging, distraction-free learning environment, and this law supports our goal.

Overview of the Law

Beginning in September 2025, students will not be permitted to use **internet-enabled devices** (including smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, and any similar devices) **at any time during the school day**—this includes lunch, recess, hallways, and study periods.

Please note:

- School-issued laptops or tablets used specifically for instructional purposes are permitted.

Implementation at the Junior High and High School: Yondr Pouches

To support consistent enforcement, **we will be using Yondr pouches in grades 8-12** to securely store students' personal devices during the school day. Upon arrival at school, students will be required to place their internet-enabled devices in their district-issued Yondr pouch. The pouch will be locked and remain in the student's possession. The pouch will be unlocked at the end of the school day.

This method ensures that students have access to their devices before and after school while minimizing distractions during learning time.

For a visual demonstration of how Yondr pouches work, please watch this short video:

 [How Yondr Works: A Quick Demo](#)

Implementation at our Middle and Elementary Schools:

Storage places for Prek-7th grade will be either lockers or cubbies depending on the building.

Exceptions Permitted by Law

Limited exceptions may be granted in the following situations:

- When authorized by a teacher or administrator for a specific **educational purpose**
- When required for **health-related needs**
- In the event of a **genuine emergency**
- For use as **translation services**
- For students with responsibilities as **primary caregivers** (upon counselor evaluation)
- If required by the student's **IEP or 504 Plan**

Parent Communication During the School Day

We understand that staying connected with your child is important. The policy requires schools to provide **alternative methods for communication**, and we will ensure that you can reach your child through the main office or other approved means if needed during the school day. Detailed procedures for this will be shared by each building principal this summer.

What Happens If a Student Violates the Policy?

While we expect full cooperation, we recognize there may be instances of non-compliance. Please know:

- Schools are not permitted to suspend a student solely for unauthorized use of a device.
- Repeated violations will be addressed through our code of conduct with appropriate interventions.

Next Steps

- The Board of Education is expected to adopt a new BOE policy about the use of cell phones. We anticipate a finalized policy will be available on our website in August of 2025.

I would like to thank our Cell Phone Committee for their hard work over the past 7 months. Additionally, I would like to thank our Board of Education Policy Committee for their recent review.

We appreciate your partnership as we work together to foster a learning environment that prioritizes engagement, safety, and academic success. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your school's main office. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Terry L. Ward