



NYS PTA Guidance on Limitations on Internet-Enabled Devices

As a part of the state budget, NYS has enacted a new “bell to bell” limitation on internet-enabled devices for school districts, charter schools, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). With this enactment, NYS becomes the 5th state to have statewide limitations on, in particular, cell phone use in school buildings.

You can read the enacted law here: <https://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2025/S3006C> (Part C, internal pages 31-33).

NYS PTA was heavily involved in ensuring NYS PTA priorities were reflected in the final law, including: (1) stakeholder, parent and student engagement, (2) parent/family communication and connection, (3) permissible exemptions for allowable school-day use, (4) local development of the actual policy, and (5) limitations on student suspensions.

The school districts that have begun this work already in NYS have reported great success in both increased student learning, achievement, and student mental health and wellness. While we are told year one implementation may be difficult, we are here to assist in this process, as are the other stakeholder groups – together!

What type of device?

This limitation applies to any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet, including social media applications.

It does NOT apply to non-internet-enabled devices such as cellular phones or other communication devices not capable of connecting to the internet or enabling the user to access content on the internet, or internet-enabled devices supplied by the school district, charter school, or BOCES (school-issued devices like chrome books) that are used for an educational purpose.

When does it apply?

This limitation applies from the morning bell to the afternoon bell, and this means: the entirety of every instructional day during all instructional time and non-instructional time, including but not limited to homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

Where does it apply?

This limitation applies in, on, or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a district elementary, intermediate, junior high, vocational, or high school, a charter school, or a BOCES facility.

Local development of policy with stakeholder involvement

The school district, charter school or BOCES must develop and adopt, no later than August 1, 2025, a written policy prohibiting the use of restricted internet enabled devices.

- ➔ This means that for nearly all public schools, the policy development will begin soon, and the school board must adopt (pass) the policy no later that August 1, 2025.

The policy **MUST** be written in consultation with local stakeholders, including but not limited to the employee organization representing each bargaining unit within the school building (unions representing teachers, staff or administrators), parents, and students, prior to its adoption.

- ➔ This means that representatives from your PTA should be fully involved in the development of this local policy.

Also, the local policy adopted must include one or more methods for persons in “parental relation” to a student to contact the student during the school day. The policy must provide for written notification to such persons in parental relation of these methods at the beginning of each school year and upon student enrollment.

- ➔ This means that there must be a way or process outlined in the local policy for parents and guardians to contact their child during the school day, if needed.

There is **NOT** one way outlined or allowed to store phones or other devices. This is left up to local decision.

- ➔ This means that the actual storage of cell phones is up to local control. Ideas can include having students keep them in lockers, or keep turned off in backpacks, or use cellphone storage devices such as pouches, or cellphone holders in classrooms.

Uses of devices during the day

The following uses are listed as possible permissible times when a student could use an internet-enabled device. The local policy should consider and address these instances:

1. for a specific educational purpose
2. where necessary for the management of a student's healthcare (think glucose monitoring)
3. in the event of an emergency
4. for translation services
5. on a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by a school psychologist, school social worker, or school counselor, for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and wellbeing of a family member
6. where required by law (state or federal law)

IMPORTANT - The policy may **NOT** prohibit a student's use of an internet-enabled device where such use is included in the student's individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan.

- ➔ We strongly feel that the above 1-6 list should be fully included in each local policy as a permissible use.
- ➔ Devices **MUST** always be allowed if allowance is listed in an IEP or 504 plan. For students with disabilities, this is important to note when planning an IEP or 504 plan.

No suspension

Importantly, schools are **NOT** permitted to the suspend a student if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device in violation of the policy adopted.

- ➔ This means that use of a cell phone during limited times cannot be the only reason to suspend a student.

Your PTA Checklist:

1. Contact your principal/superintendent and request PTA representation on the internet-enabled policy development committee
2. Read the law: <https://legislation.nysenate.gov/pdf/bills/2025/S3006C> (Part C, internal pages 31-33).
3. Read this memo, and give to your representatives on the committee
4. Attend your policy development committee meetings, don't miss one
5. Ask that the permissible uses listed as 1-6 above be included in your local policy
6. Make sure that allowance as a part of an IEP or 504 plans is included – it MUST be
7. Make sure there is a way for parents or guardians to contact their children during the day, if needed, in your policy – it MUST be

If you have questions as you support your students during this process, please contact our Executive Director Kyle Belokopitsky, Esq. at execdirector@nyspta.org. Email is best for quickest answer.

Thank you for your work as we Measure our Mission for Every Child!