



SAINT DOMINIC'S FAMILY SERVICES EDUCATION PROGRAM BLAUVELT CAMPUS

STUDENTS AND PERSONAL ELECTRONICS POLICY

St. Dominic's Family Services strongly supports the integration of digital tools — particularly those provided and managed by the school — to enhance instruction, foster engagement, and prepare students for success in a digitally connected world. Educators are empowered to incorporate technology in ways that align with curricular goals and instructional best practices.

St. Dominic's Family Services recognizes that the growing prevalence of personal internet-enabled devices, such as smartphones and smartwatches, has introduced new challenges related to distraction, equity, and safety. In response, and in accordance with state law, St. Dominic's Family Services prohibits student use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day.

This policy has been updated to ensure compliance with [Section 2803 of the New York State Education Law](#) and to promote a safe and distraction-free learning environment for all students. [NYS ED Law Section 2803](#) requires these changes to be in policy for the start of the 2025-2026 school year. These updates reflect a balanced approach: limiting non-educational distractions from personal devices while encouraging the structured, supervised use of technology for learning, accessibility, and communication when necessary.

Definitions: as defined by [Education Law §2803](#):

- **Internet-Enabled Devices** shall mean and include any smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, or other device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content online.
- **School Day** shall mean the entirety of every instructional day as required by [subdivision seven of section 3604 of the Education Law](#). This includes all instructional and non-instructional time, such as homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and time between classes.
- **School Grounds** shall mean in or on, or within any building, structure, athletic field, playground, or land contained within the real property boundary line of any school in the District.

Generally, the district is not responsible for stolen, lost or damaged personal electronic devices brought to school.

Communication with Parents/Persons in Parental Relation

During the school day, to minimize distractions, parents (which, for purposes of this policy, includes persons in parental relation) may contact their children by calling the school main office. Students may contact their parents by using the school phone located in the counseling suite. The district will notify parents in writing of the communication protocol at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

Device Access and Storage

As required by [Education Law §2803](#), this policy prohibits student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day (including all classes, homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time) on school grounds (any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the boundary of a school or district or BOCES facility), unless under an exception (e.g., IEP/Section 504 or as permitted below).

1. At the elementary school level, students are discouraged from bringing devices to school. Any device that is brought to school must be silenced and kept stowed away.
2. At the middle school and high school level, student devices must be silenced and stowed away.

Administrators and staff may also restrict use of electronic devices during school events and activities held outside of the school day and/or off school grounds.

In response to the challenges related to distraction, equity, and safety created by the growing prevalence of personal internet-enabled devices, such as smartphones and smartwatches, New York State has passed [Education Law §2803](#) prohibiting student use of personal internet-connected devices in schools. Accordingly, and in recognition of the importance of maintaining a focused, respectful, and academically rigorous environment, St. Dominic's Family Services shall prohibit student use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day.

This policy, however, is not intended to discourage the thoughtful and meaningful use of technology in the classroom. On the contrary, St. Dominic's Family Services strongly supports the integration of digital tools—particularly those provided and managed by the school—to enhance instruction, foster engagement, and prepare students for success in a digitally connected world. Educators are empowered to incorporate technology in ways that align with curricular goals and instructional best practices.

This policy reflects a balanced approach: limiting non-educational distractions from personal devices while encouraging the structured, supervised use of technology for

learning, accessibility, and communication when necessary. The goal is to ensure all students can learn in an environment that is safe, inclusive, and future-ready.

I. Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for student use of internet-enabled devices during the school day. St. Dominic's Family Services aims to foster a safe, equitable, and academically focused learning environment while responsibly incorporating technology into instruction.

II. Definitions

- **Internet-Enabled Devices:** Smartphones, tablets, smartwatches, and other devices capable of internet access, excluding district-issued devices for educational purposes.
- **School Day:** All instructional and non-instructional time during a required school day.
- **School Grounds:** Any property owned or operated by the school district used for educational purposes.

III. General Prohibition

Students are prohibited from using personal internet-enabled devices during the school day anywhere on school grounds, unless explicitly authorized under Section V of this policy.

IV. Stakeholder Involvement

This policy was developed in consultation with teachers, union representatives, school counselors, students, and parent representatives, ensuring alignment with community values and educational goals.

V. Exceptions for Educational and Essential Use

Student use of internet-enabled devices may be permitted:

1. For educational purposes **under teacher or administrator authorization.**
2. When necessary for healthcare management (**e.g., diabetes monitoring apps**).
3. For caregiving students, when determined appropriate by a counselor or school psychologist.
4. As required by law or regulation, including:
 1. A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or
 2. A Section 504 Plan under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 3. For translation services for English language learners, as determined by program needs, as instructed by classroom teachers, etc.

VI. Communication with Parents/Guardians

- To accommodate necessary communication, parents or persons in parental relation may use the following methods to contact their student during school hours while adhering to this policy:
 - School Office Phone: Parents or persons in parental relation may call the school's main office, and the office staff can relay messages to the student or call the student to the office to speak with their parent or person in parental relation.
- Written Notes: Parents or persons in parental relation can drop off written notes at the school's main office, which can then be delivered to the student by school staff. Parents and persons in parental relation will be notified in writing of the methods that are available for contacting their student during school hours at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

VII. On-Site Storage

- Students must store personal internet-enabled devices in designated classroom locations.
- Students are responsible for the safekeeping of personal devices; the district is not liable for loss or damage.

VIII. Publication & Accessibility

- This policy will be posted on the agency's website.

Ref:

[Education Law §2803](#)

Price v. New York City Board of Education, 51 A.D.3d 277, lv. to appeal denied, 11 N.Y.3d 702 (2008) (District may ban possession of cell phones on school property)

NYSED, *Prohibition of Cell Phones and Electronic Devices in New York State Assessments*, www.nysed.gov/educator-integrity/prohibition-cell-phones-and-electronic-devices-new-york-state-assessments