

Kiryas Joel Union Free School District

5315

Prohibition of Student Cell Phones and Internet-Enabled Devices

I. Purpose

The Kiryas Joel UFSD Board of Education is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment that promotes academic achievement and positive social-emotional development for all students. In accordance with New York State Education Law §2803, this policy establishes clear guidelines for the use of cell phones and other internet-enabled devices by students on school grounds during the school day. This policy aims to:

- Minimize distractions and disruptions to the instructional process.
- Foster increased student focus, engagement, and concentration in learning.
- Promote meaningful in-person interactions among students and staff.
- Reduce instances of cyberbullying and other inappropriate online behaviors.
- Support the mental health and well-being of students.

II. Definitions

- **Internet-Enabled Device:** 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. This does not include devices supplied by the district for educational purposes.
- **School Day:** The entirety of every instructional day, including all instructional time and non-instructional time, such as homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.
- **School Grounds:** Any building, structure, playground, or land located within the boundaries of the school. This does not cover school buses while they are on their route and not located on school grounds.

III. Policy Statement

The Kiryas Joel UFSD prohibits the unsanctioned use of internet-enabled devices by students on school grounds during the entire school day (bell-to-bell).

IV. Prohibited Use

Unless specifically exempted by this policy, students are prohibited from using or having accessible their internet-enabled devices during the school day, including but not limited to:

- During instructional time (classes, labs, etc.)
- During non-instructional time (homeroom, lunch, recess, study halls, passing time)
- In hallways, restrooms, libraries, and other common areas
- During school-sponsored activities or events that occur during the school day

V. Exceptions to the Ban

Kiryas Joel Union Free School District

The use of internet-enabled devices may be authorized under specific circumstances, including:

- **Educational Purposes:** When authorized by a teacher, principal, or District administration for a specific educational purpose relevant to the curriculum or instruction. School-issued internet-enabled devices used for educational purposes are exempt from this policy.
- **Medical Needs:** When necessary for the management of a student's healthcare, as documented by an appropriate medical professional and approved by the Building Principal.
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan:** When the use of an internet-enabled device is explicitly included in a student's current IEP or Section 504 Plan as a necessary accommodation.
- **Translation Services:** When required for translation services to support a student's learning.
- **Emergency Situations:** In the event of a genuine emergency, as determined by school staff or administration.

VI. Communication with Parents/Guardians During the School Day

The District understands the importance of communication between students and their families. During the school day, parents/persons in parental relation may contact their children through the following methods:

- By calling the main office of the student's school building. School staff will relay messages to students as needed.

Students who need to contact a parent/guardian during the school day may request to use a school phone in the main office or other designated administrative office.

VII. Violations and Disciplinary Action

Violations of this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct. It is important to note that, as per New York State Education Law, a student shall not be suspended if the sole grounds for the suspension is that the student accessed an internet-enabled device in violation of this policy. However, repeated violations or violations that disrupt the educational environment or pose a safety risk may lead to more severe disciplinary consequences.

Upon initial violation, the device will be confiscated by school staff and retained in a secure location for a parent/guardian to retrieve at the end of the school day. Subsequent violations may lead to more restrictive measures regarding device storage and access. School administration will discuss the policy, its aims, and the benefits of a distraction-free environment with students and their parents/guardians, and will work with families to address any difficulties in complying with the policy.

Kiryas Joel Union Free School District

VIII. Policy Review and Reporting

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with New York State Education Law. At the July, 2026 Organizational Meeting, and annually thereafter, the Kiryas Joel UFSD will report to the Board of Education with a summary of enforcement of this policy during the previous school year. This report will include non-identifiable demographic data of students who were subject to disciplinary action for policy violations and will provide an analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement. If the analysis identifies a statistically significant disparate impact, the report will also include a mitigation action plan to address the disparity.

IX. Stakeholder Consultation and Public Availability

In developing this policy, the Kiryas Joel UFSD consulted with local stakeholders, including employees, parents, and students. The finalized policy will be posted in a clearly visible and will be made available, upon request, in the Yiddish language. Written notification of the methods for guardians to contact students during the school day will be provided at the beginning of each school year and upon student enrollment.

Adoption Date: July 24, 2025