Key Questions to Inform Your Cellphone Policy

Crafting a cellphone policy isn't one-size-fits-all. School size, caregiver concerns, and infrastructure are some of the factors to consider. Each school's policy needs to make sense for the community it serves, and the whole community needs to understand and support it.

A strong cellphone policy should:
1. Prioritize student learning and well-being
2. Allow teachers to focus on instruction and positive relationships with students
3. Address concerns from parents and caregivers

Consider these questions to help you create a cellphone policy that fits your school community:

Prioritize students' learning and well-being.

How will we collect student input and reflect it in the policy?

Are the rules around phones in school developmentally appropriate?

How will we communicate the rules to students in age-appropriate ways that set clear expectations, outline consequences, and allow for exceptions and accommodations?

How will we help students think about *why* these changes are happening, and do they understand what's in it for *them*?

If students will be transitioning to a phone-free environment, how will we support them with social and emotional skills, self-regulation, and in-person communication?

How will we integrate digital citizenship instruction to build healthy habits and life skills?

Support teachers so they can focus on student learning.

How will we collect teacher input and reflect it in the policy?

What are the clear, consistent steps that teachers should take when students don't follow the policy?

How will administrators handle the follow-through and enforcement of the policy in order to limit classroom conflict and preserve positive student-teacher relationships?

What investment in infrastructure is necessary (pouches, lockers, cubbies, etc.) to support distraction-free learning?

How does the policy account for other devices in the classroom and how/when they're used for learning?

How can we ensure that all staff follow the policy consistently?

Engage with families early and often.

How will we collect caregiver input and reflect it in the policy?

How will we communicate that cellphone bans can actually enhance school safety and community by limiting opportunities for cyberbullying and access to inappropriate content?

How will we highlight that limiting cellphone access will increase SEL and in-person interactions?

How can we help families communicate with their kids during the school day, when necessary, in non-disruptive ways?

What digital citizenship resources will we provide to families to extend healthy habits and digital life skills to students' homes and reinforce the school's policy?

Visit **commonsense.org/education** to find additional resources about this topic and much more!

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