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PS 170 Cell Phone & Electronics Policy

PURPOSE To create an environment conducive to learning by minimizing distractions caused by cell phones and other personal internet-enabled electronic devices, ensure the safety and focus of all students during school the school day, and follow *Education Law §2803*, effective August 1, 2025, all New York State schools are required to adopt a policy that prohibits the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds. An *"internet-enabled electronic device"* is defined as an electronic device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet. ***Examples of such devices include cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, iPads, and portable music and entertainment systems.***

POLICY STATEMENT Students will not be permitted to use or access their personal internet-enabled electronic devices upon arrival at school until the end of the school day. The school day is defined as the period from the moment students enter the school building until the last class of the day ends, including during lunch. The school day starts at 8:30 am and ends at 2:50 pm. This policy is also in effect during the breakfast program from 7:30 to 8:30 am, after-school programs start at 2:50 and continue to program end, and during school trips. Students will be able to use school/NYCPS-issued devices during the school day.

COLLECTION AND STORAGE At P.S. 170, all student devices will be placed in lockboxes inside classroom closets at the start of the school day and remain there until dismissal.

Device Return at Dismissal:

- At the end of the day, teachers will retrieve the lockbox and return devices directly to students before they leave the classroom.
- Students must confirm they have received their device before exiting the room.

Early Dismissals:

- Students with approved early dismissals will collect their devices from their classroom teacher before leaving the building.

EXEMPTIONS

Consistent with Chancellor's Regulation A-413 and NYS law, exemptions include:

- Devices required for medical purposes documented in health plans.
- Devices specified in IEPs or Section 504 plans.
- Use authorized by staff for instructional or translation purposes.
- Devices for emergency communication or family caregiving needs.

Process to Request an Exemption:

1. Parents/guardians must submit a written request to the ENL/Special Education Coordinator, Mrs. Elen Stratis, at estratis@schools.nyc.gov or by delivering a letter to the main office.

2. Requests must explain the reason for the exemption and include any relevant documentation (medical plan, IEP, caregiving needs, etc.).
3. The principal or designee will review and respond to the request within 5 school days.

Approved exemptions will be documented and shared with relevant staff.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

If you need to reach your child during the school day, please call the **main office** at **718-491-8400** and ask for **Mrs. Aida Ahmad** (School Secretary) or **Mrs. Abigail Figueroa** (Parent Coordinator).

Student Access to Phones:

- In the event of an emergency or urgent matter, students may request to use the **main office phone** to contact a parent/guardian.

Automated Communication System:

- P.S. 170 uses the **GAMA (Guardian Access Messaging Application)** to send emergency alerts and important updates.
- To receive messages, families must set up a **NYCSA (New York City Schools Account)**.
- Instructions for setting up NYCSA are available on the school website or from the parent coordinator's office.

DISCIPLINE

- Any cell phone or personal internet-enabled device observed outside the locked classroom cabinets at any time during the school day (including school trips, the breakfast program and all after-school programming) will be confiscated. Confiscated phones must be picked up in person by the child's parent or legal guardian.
- Students who use electronic devices in violation of the NYCPS Discipline Code, the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413, and/or the NYCPS Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy ("IAUSP") will be subject to progressive discipline. This means that the disciplinary responses will escalate based on the nature and frequency of the violation. As provided in the State law, a student may not be suspended solely on the grounds that the student accessed a personal internet-enabled device in violation of school policy. Repeated incidents of insubordination (i.e. refusal to surrender or store device) may result in a suspension if approved by the Office of Safety and Youth Development.

THEFT/DAMAGE

- In the unlikely event that an electronic device is stolen or damaged at school, parents can submit a claim to the Comptroller's Office. More information on submitting a claim is available on the Comptroller's webpage.