

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

POLICY 555

STUDENT CELL PHONE POLICY

POLICY MANAGEMENT

Adopted: 12/2024

Reviewed/Revised 7/26**

Mandatory: Yes

Frequency: Annual

Distribution: Website

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a mechanism that will ensure that students and staff are able to attend school and work in a manner most conducive to allowing for a safe, healthy, and productive school environment, where teachers are able to facilitate their lessons and students are able to maximize their educational opportunities without the unnecessary distractions that cell phones and other electronic devices cause and/or contribute to.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

All students, regardless of age, are expected to attend school each day, ready to engage and participate in all school lessons and classroom activities without creating unnecessary disruptions, including through the use of cell phones and/or other forms of electronic technology, especially while in class. Students who possess cell phones and/or other forms of electronic devices are limited as to how and when they may access them. Students, regardless of age, are not permitted to display, use, or access cell phones and/or devices in class without the expressed permission of the classroom teachers and or administrator and his or her staff.

There is no implied consent. This means that cell phones and/or devices are not to be visible or otherwise out or on display whatsoever during class time, which is defined to mean “bell-to-bell,” or from the time the bell rings indicating the start of class until the bell rings indicating the end of class.

Elementary School (Grades K–5): For elementary students for whom the bells do not indicate the start or end of a particular class, the phones and devices are not allowed out or on display during the school’s operational hours, currently 8:10 a.m. - 2:40 p.m.* Devices are not allowed to be used in any classroom regardless of the time of day or whether bells have indicated the start or end of class.

Middle School (Grades 6–8): Students may bring their phones to school and keep them in their possession throughout the day. However, phones and other personal electronic devices may not be used at any time during the school day, beginning upon entry into the building. Devices must remain put away and out of use until students leave the building at the end of the school day. Personal electronic devices are not permitted for use in any classroom.

High School (Grades 9–12): Students may possess their phones throughout the school day. Phone use is permitted only during passing time between periods and during breakfast and lunch. Phones and other personal electronic devices may not be used during instructional time or in classrooms unless specifically authorized by a teacher for an educational purpose.

*If the school's official start and stop times change, the policy shall inherently change to match the school's official start and stop times each year.

III. DEFINITION

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices are those which are capable of storing and accessing data, interacting with others through wireless technology, and/or the Internet. Such devices are capable of allowing for communication with others, playing music, playing games, playing videos, accessing data, accessing streaming services, taking pictures, and other applications which may or may not be addressed in this section. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smart phones, cord chargers and charging devices, tablets, I pads, laptops, portable video games or video players, music players, smart watches, smart glasses, bluetooth devices, headphones, earpods, and airpods/earbuds...or whatever name may apply at the time.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

In certain cases, with the expressed permission of the school's staff or administration, students may use a cell phone or device because they require or rely on using it for communication with staff and students regarding school activities, lessons, or for other necessary reasons. This may or may not be related to a disability or mental health issue, or other reason why the student(s) require the use of technology to communicate with others during the educational process. Students eligible for this exception will be known and identified by the school's administration and staff and will be formally granted permission to access devices. Such permissions are not to be implied.

In certain circumstances, a student may need to use his or her phone to monitor a medical condition. In such cases, the school must be notified of the need and an official plan will be developed to support the student.

V. POSSESSION OF CELL PHONE AND DEVICES

The school may permit students to possess cell phones and devices at school, as these devices may provide families with a mechanism to communicate with each other for a variety of purposes, safety being among the most important. Students in grades K-5 will be required to submit their cell phones and devices to their teacher for safekeeping during the school day and will not be allowed to access them until the very end of the school day, or just prior to dismissal. Students in grades 6-12 may also be required to submit their phones for safe keeping to a teacher or to the main office. In this case, the phones will not be accessible and will be returned to the students just prior to them leaving the school for the day. In other cases, students may be permitted to possess their devices, but the cell phones and devices shall not be allowed to be out or otherwise on display during any class period, otherwise stated- from bell-to-bell for each scheduled class. Students violating this expectation may be required to submit the cell phone and/or device each day upon arrival to a teacher or to the main office. The cell phone and/or device will be returned to the student just prior to leaving the school for the day.

VI. WHERE CELL PHONES AND DEVICES MAY BE ACCESSED

The school's administration and staff will determine, as necessary, when and where cell phones and devices may be accessed by students. Potential areas where cell phones may be accessed include, when permission is granted:

- Hallways during passing time
- Cafeteria during meal times
- Classroom, hallways, and cafeteria before or after school
- At the bus stop and on the school bus

Currently, only high school students (grades 9-12) are permitted to use their devices during passing time, breakfast and lunch.

The use of cell phones and cameras is strictly prohibited in restrooms. The school reserves the right to amend the points of access and to whom those points of access are made available to. Students will be given specific cell phone instructions regarding off-campus activities/field trips

Consequences

Students in violation of this policy may receive one or more of the following consequences as administered by the school's administration:

- The student may receive a warning and will be required to put the phone away during class time.
- The student may be required to submit the phone to a classroom teacher or other staff member for the duration of the class period or activity.
- The student may be required to submit the phone to one or more teachers during class for an unspecified period of time. This practice may continue for any amount of time up to a full school year depending on the student and his or her history of not complying with the cell phone policy.
- The student may be required to submit the cell phone and/or device to the main office of the school for safe keeping from the time the student enters the school until the time he or she leaves for the day.
- The student may be restricted from bringing cell phones and/or devices to the school altogether.
- The student may receive additional consequences for violation of this policy, including detention and/or out-of-school suspension.

Notable

The school provides all students with a Chromebook to use for school lessons and completing school work. The Chromebook has inherent limits and may only be used at school for school purposes. Students in violation of this expectation may lose the privilege of using a school-sponsored device. School-provided Chromebooks are not to be used for charging cell phones or other devices inside or outside of class. Students are prohibited from taking photos or videos of others through their devices while at school as a matter of privacy. There are particular cases where families have expressed concerns about having pictures taken of their children and posted over the Internet. As a result, photos and/or videos are not to be taken by students while at school.

Parental Communication

Parents who need to communicate with their children during school hours should contact the school via the main number and ask the office staff to help them. Students who use their phones in violation of the policy, even when communicating with a parent, will be subject to disciplinary consequences.