

Board

Policy

Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices During the Instructional Day

Eastern Suffolk BOCES consulted with local stakeholders including employee organizations representing each bargaining unit, parents, and students to develop this policy to prohibit the use of Internet-enabled devices by students during the instructional day on ESBOCES grounds. This policy aims to ensure that students remain focused on their academic responsibilities throughout the instructional day, which includes all instructional and non-instructional periods such as homeroom, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. "Internet-enabled devices" means and includes 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;

"Internet-enabled devices" does not include:
 - a. Non-Internet-enabled devices such as cellular phones or other communication devices not capable of connecting to the Internet or enabling the user to access content on the Internet; or
 - b. Internet-enabled devices supplied by the district, charter school, or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) that are used for an educational purpose.
2. "Instructional day" means the entirety of every instructional day as required by subdivision 7 of the Education Law Section 3604 during all instructional time and non-instructional time, including but not limited to homeroom periods, lunch, recess, study halls, and passing time.
3. "ESBOCES grounds" means in or on or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a ESBOCES facility.

Students are generally prohibited from using Internet-enabled devices during the instructional day anywhere on ESBOCES grounds.

However, students may be authorized to use an Internet-enabled device during the instructional day on ESBOCES grounds:

1. If authorized by a teacher, principal, or ESBOCES for a specific educational purpose;
2. Where necessary for the management of a student's health care;
3. In the event of an emergency;
4. For translation services;

5. On a case-by-case basis, upon review and determination by an ESBOCES psychologist, ESBOCES social worker, or ESBOCES counselor for a student caregiver who is routinely responsible for the care and well-being of a family member; or
6. Where required by law.

Students must be permitted to use an Internet-enabled device where the use is included in the student's:

1. Individualized Education Program (IEP); or
2. Section 504 Plan.

On-Site Storage of Internet-Enabled Devices Including Cell Phones

Students will store their Internet-enabled devices in designated on-site storage areas during the instructional day. On-site storage will consist of student lockers or locked cabinets in their homerooms, classrooms or CTE course. These designated on-site storage areas will be easily accessible to students and provide adequate security to ensure the safekeeping of the student's devices.

Devices will be collected at the beginning of the student's instructional day and will be retrieved upon them leaving the building for the day. This will be communicated to our students, staff, parent/person in parental relation and component school districts.

Methods for Parents to Contact Students During the Instructional Day

To accommodate necessary communication, parents or persons in parental relation may use the following methods to contact their student during instructional hours while adhering to this policy:

1. ESBOCES Office Phone: Parents or persons in parental relation may call ESBOCES'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.
2. Designated Contact Email: ESBOCES may provide a designated email address for parents and persons in parental relation to send messages. These emails may be monitored by ESBOCES staff who can then pass the messages on to the students.
3. ESBOCES Messaging Application: Eastern Suffolk BOCES uses Parent Square as a means of mass communication.
4. Parents or persons in parental relation can drop off written notes at the ESBOCES's main office or email, which can then be delivered to the student by ESBOCES staff.

Parents and persons in parental relation will be notified in writing of the methods that are available for contacting their student during ESBOCES hours upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year.

Student Discipline for Accessing Internet-Enabled Devices During the Instructional Day

ESBOCES is prohibited from suspending a student solely for accessing internet-enabled devices in violation of this policy.

Posting and Translation of Policy

ESBOCES will post this policy in a clearly visible and accessible location on its website. Translations of the policy into the 12 most common non-English languages spoken by limited-English proficient individuals in the state will be provided upon request by a student or other persons in parental relation to a student.

Reporting and Mitigation Action Plan

Beginning September 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, ESBOCES will publish an annual report on its website detailing enforcement of this policy within ESBOCES in the prior school year. This report will include non-identifiable demographic data of students who have faced disciplinary action for non-compliance and analysis of any demographic disparities in enforcement of this policy. If a statistically significant disparate enforcement impact is identified, the report will include a mitigation action plan.

References:

- Chapter 56, Part C - Education Law Section 2803
- Policy 6216 Student Use of Electronic Communications and Telecommunications Equipment

First Adopted: 7/17/2025