

# "Away for the Day" Cell Phone/Device-Free Learning Policy 2024-2025

## Policy

As a child-centered organization, Fostering Leadership Academy is now a cell phone and personal electronic device-free school. Our **"Away for the Day"** expectation means students must either **leave devices at home** or check them in at the beginning of the day. This policy is intended to **increase** academic focus and **decrease** negative social behaviors and safety risks.

## Cell Phone / Personal Electronic Device Definition

- Cell phones (both phones that connect to the internet and non-internet connected cell phones that send and receive text messages and make phone calls)
- Personal electronic devices, including:
  - tablets and video games
  - Airpods, earbuds, Bluetooth connected headphones
  - Smartwatches, fitness trackers, and other accessories that connect to the internet

## "Away for the Day" Daily Collection Procedures

1. Students turn off and turn in their cell phones and personal electronic devices in their homeroom class within the first 10 minutes of the school day.
2. The devices are placed into a padded envelope labeled with the student's first and last name and grade level and kept in a storage bin. Storage bins are picked up from each homeroom class at 8:30 AM and taken to the Main Office. (After 8:30 AM, office personnel collect and store late-arriving student's phones/devices).
3. Storage bins are locked in a security closet in the Main Office throughout the school day until they are delivered to the last-period class during the final 10 minutes of the school day and passed out by the teacher immediately before bell dismissal.
  - If a student is signed out early during the school day, an approved office personnel or Administrator will retrieve the checked-in device(s) for the student once a guardian has signed the student out.
  - Devices may not be stored in book bags or purses.

## Family Communications During the School Day

The Main Office phone will be used if a parent, guardian, or student needs to communicate during the school day.

Students must obtain a written pass from their teacher to go to the Main Office and make a phone call.

Important messages from parents/guardians will be communicated to students promptly, including a call back from the student if needed.

In addition, every classroom has a phone and/or a walkie-talkie that teachers can use to call the Main Office.

## Consequences

Because this is a district-wide policy that includes an all-school routine, there are **no** warnings given before enforcement of the consequences.

- **1st Time Not Following Expectation:** Cell phone/personal electronic device is taken to the office by a Behavior Interventionist, Assistant Principal, or Principal for storage. The student can pick it up from the office at the end of the school day.
- **2nd Time Not Following Expectation:** Cell phone/personal electronic device is taken to the office by a Behavior Interventionist, Assistant Principal, or Principal for storage. The student's parent or guardian must pick it up from the office at the end of the school day. A copy of the cell phone policy will be provided and reviewed with the parent/guardian upon return of the cell phone.
- **3rd Time Not Following Expectation:** Cell phone/personal electronic device is taken to the office by a Behavior Interventionist, Assistant Principal, or Principal, and kept until a sit-down parent/guardian meeting is scheduled with the Assistant Principal and a plan is agreed upon on how to proceed for the rest of the school year.

You can **ensure** none of these consequences are necessary by leaving all devices at home.

To learn more about WHY this **"Away for the Day"** policy is so important for our children and to read Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, **scan the QR Code below.**

Printed copies are also available in the Main Office.





# **"Away for the Day"**

## **Cell Phone/Device-Free Learning Policy**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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#### **1 Why did our school adopt a phone/device-free policy?**

Studies show that having a cell phone, even turned off and put away, decreases student focus, attention, and learning. Furthermore, data shows that cell phone social media use increases the risk of poor mental health.

#### **2 How do I contact my child during the school day?**

Parents/guardians who need to contact their child during school hours should call the Main Office. Office Staff will relay important messages to students and if needed, allow the child to return the call from the Main Office.

#### **3 Why can't teachers be in charge of keeping phones in the classroom?**

Children need consistency and one policy for the entire school benefits all students. Teachers need to focus on teaching rather than monitoring phone use. When the whole building has one expectation, kids and adults spend more time learning.

#### **4 What if my child has a medical condition that must be monitored by cell phone?**

The school requires documentation from a licensed medical professional to support an exemption for cell phone use, such as for diabetes or seizure monitoring. This exception must be written into a 504 plan, and the phone is only used for medical monitoring.

#### **5 What if my child needs their phone in case of a crisis or lockdown at school?**

School security experts say cell phones can make children LESS SAFE in crisis situations for the following reasons:

1. Using cell phones during an emergency can distract students from following safety directions being given by staff.
2. Cell phone use can slow down emergency response from police and fire services if students are calling their families to come to the school.
3. Worried family members trying to reach the school can jam communications, again interfering with first responders.
4. Cell phone use can cause untrue and harmful rumors or false alarms that cause unnecessary panic.

#### **6 If my child's phone/device is lost or damaged, does the school pay replacement costs?**

No, the school assumes **no liability** for student phones/devices. Phones/devices will be locked away during the school day. To ENSURE no damage/lost device, students should keep all devices at home.

# Get the Facts!

Cell phone use negatively impacts learning, mental health, and school safety.

SINCE 2010

154% ↑  
Increase in anxiety

106% ↑

Increase in depression

*The Anxiety Disorders*

41%

OF TEENS WITH THE HIGHEST SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE rate their overall mental health as poor or very poor

*American Psychological Association*

75%  
of teens admit to using their cellphone to CHEAT

*Common Sense Media*

22%

of high school students have SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR

10%

HAVE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR

*CBQ, 2023*

Adolescents who experienced cyberbullying were more than **FOUR TIMES** as likely to report thoughts of

**SUICIDE AND ATTEMPTS**

as those who didn't

*National Institute of Health*



Each additional hour of total screen time increases the odds of suicidal behaviors

*Statista Direct*

**STEEP DROP IN BULLYING**

46% of girls & 43% of boys

experienced a reduction of bullying after smartphone bans were enacted.

*Sanjourne Ryan, Student Outcomes and Mental Health*

**1/3 OF ALL TEENS**

reported that they have been exposed to pornography during the school day

*Common Sense Media*

Youth reporting **LONELINESS** are also more likely to drop out of school at the age of 16

*Local Trends During the School Years*

95%

OF TEACHERS SAY ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IS A PROBLEM IN PUBLIC K-12 SCHOOLS

*National Education Association*

87% of teachers said bullying is a problem in public K-12 schools

74% of middle school teachers call bullying a major problem

*National Education Association*



**"BRAIN DRAIN"**

The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity

*Brain Drain*

97%

OF STUDENTS USE PHONES DURING SCHOOL

An average of 43 minutes per day, spent primarily on social media, YouTube, and gaming

*Common Sense Media*

**SOCIAL MEDIA IS NEARLY UNIVERSAL**

40% of 8-12 year olds are on social media

95% of teenagers are on social media

*Adviser on Social Media and Youth Mental Health*

TEENS SPEND NEARLY FIVE HOURS A DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA APPS

*American Psychological Association*

**3+ HOURS PER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

doubles the risk of poor mental health including experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety

*Adviser on Social Media and Youth Mental Health*

NEA Poll

**83% OF TEACHERS**

support an all day phone-free policy

*National Education Association*



OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS REPORT CELLPHONES ARE A MAJOR DISTRACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

*The Mean Presence of Cell Phones May be Distorting*

**50%+ of kids get 237 NOTIFICATIONS PER DAY**

Some receive as many as

**4,500 EVERY DAY!**

**23% occur during school**

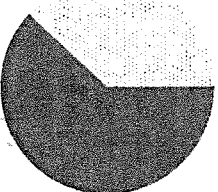
*Common Sense Media*

Phones prevent face to face communication

Research suggests that face to face communications are linked to better mental health.

*Psychology Today*

Students not using their phones during class wrote down 62% more information.



They also scored a full letter grade and a half higher on a multiple choice test

*The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Student Learning*

**RATES OF SCHOOL**

**SINCE 2012**

*Worldwide increases in Adolescent Loneliness*