



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 6, 2025

Dear DC Public Schools (DCPS) Parents and Families,

As technology becomes increasingly ingrained in our everyday lives, I am proud of how DCPS' students, educators, and school leaders have harnessed its power to enhance learning and support student well-being.

While technology provides invaluable resources and opportunities, we have also seen significant challenges when it comes to cell phones being readily accessible during the school day—particularly with focus, peer relationships, and overall mental health. **After substantial discussions with our community, DCPS will implement a [district-wide phone policy](#) beginning in School Year (SY) 2025-2026.**

Starting this August, all DCPS schools will adopt and enforce a cell phone-free policy during the "bell-to-bell" school day. This means that students will not be permitted to use their cell phones or personal electronic communication devices from the time the first bell rings in the morning until the dismissal bell in the afternoon, with limited exceptions.

Growing research suggests that increased smartphone use has fueled youth mental health concerns, negatively affected concentration, and worsened cyberbullying. Piloting a phone-free program in our middle schools since SY2022-2023 has demonstrated to us that storing students' personal devices throughout the school day has clear benefits. From fewer distractions and increased classroom engagement to reduced anxiety and stronger student relationships—DCPS is excited to scale the program so we can keep driving outcomes that positively impact our students.

Individual schools will determine how students' phones will be stored during the school day, in alignment with the policy. While all DCPS middle schools and several of our high schools already operate phone-free campuses, this will be a new shift for some school communities. If SY2025-2026 will be your school's first phone-free year, as a next step, **your child's school leader will reach out before the school year starts to share implementation plans with students and families.**

Please be assured DCPS will continue to utilize school-issued devices to integrate technology into learning experiences, including engaging students in [lessons related to digital literacy and citizenship](#). While we understand this may be an adjustment, we are confident that this change will strengthen our focus on ensuring students succeed academically, feel connected to their school, and are prepared for what's next.

Thank you for your continued support.

In partnership,

Lewis D. Ferebee, Ed.D.

Chancellor, DC Public Schools