



Northside Charter High School Distraction-Free Schools Policy

Adopted: September 8th, 2024

In alignment with our mission to foster a safe, focused, and academically rigorous learning environment, Northside Charter High School is committed to maintaining a distraction-free school setting for all students. This policy sets forth clear expectations around student use of cellphones and other personal electronic devices during the school day and outlines conditions under which exceptions may be granted.

I. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all students during regular instructional hours, school-sponsored activities during the school day, and in designated instructional areas unless otherwise specified by school staff. The purpose of this policy is to minimize distractions, support student engagement, protect student privacy, and promote academic integrity.

II. Prohibited Use

Unless explicitly authorized under the exceptions outlined in Section IV, students may not use personal electronic devices, including, but not limited to, cell phones and tablets, during the instructional day. Devices must be turned off and stored securely as described in Section III.

III. Device Storage and Security

All students are required to store their cellphones in Yondr pouches at the beginning of the school day. These pouches will be locked and kept with the student, ensuring that phones are not accessible until the end of the school day.

- **Arrival:** Upon entry to school, scholars will have their phones placed in their assigned Yondr pouch as well as locked by a dean, student aide, or director.
- **During School Hours:** The pouch will remain locked, and students will carry it with them throughout the course of the school day.



- End of Day: At the end of the school day, students will have their pouches unlocked by a staff member, retrieve their cellphones, and take their assigned pouch home. Students must return with the pouch each school day.
- This process will be continuous throughout their academic school years.

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices. Students are encouraged to bring only necessary items to school and comply with all storage protocols.

IV. Exceptions

Cellphones may be used during the instructional day only under the following circumstances:

1. Educational Use Authorized by Staff.
2. When expressly authorized by a teacher, principal, district official, or BOCES representative for a specific educational purpose.
3. Health and Emergency Situations.
 - a. For student healthcare management needs, such as monitoring a medical condition.
4. Legal Requirements and Mandated Accommodations.
 - a. When required by law or government regulation.
 - b. If permitted under a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
5. Caregiving Responsibilities.
 - a. On a case-by-case basis, exceptions may be granted by a social worker, or school counselor for students who serve as primary caregivers for family members and need to remain accessible in specific, time-limited circumstances.

All exceptions must be documented by the appropriate school personnel and reviewed periodically for continued necessity.



V. Policy Development and Community Engagement

Northside Charter High School may consult with families, students, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders when developing or amending this policy to ensure it meets the evolving needs of our school community.

VI. Disciplinary Guidelines

If a student enters the school and expresses that they do not have a phone, another staff member will communicate with a caregiver to verify whether or not the student has a phone on their person. If the student has been found to be dishonest, the following escalating consequences will occur:

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| First offense: | Verbal warning; phone secured until dismissal and documented in the NCHS infraction tracker and Student Information System (SIS); caregiver notified. |
| Second offense: | Phone secured until dismissal and documented in the NCHS infraction tracker and Student Information System (SIS); caregiver notified; Single Reflection (Detention). |
| Third offense: | Phone secured until caregiver pick-up and documented in the NCHS infraction tracker and Student Information System (SIS); phone contract; Double Reflection (Detention). |
| Fourth offense: | Documented in the NCHS infraction tracker and Student Information System (SIS); parent-admin meeting; extended contract. |

VII. Parent/Guardian Communication

To ensure ongoing connection between families and students, Northside Charter High School provides the following methods for parents/guardians to contact their children during the school day:

- Main Office Phone: (347)390-1273. Messages will be relayed to students in a timely manner.



**Northside
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Distraction-Free Schools Policy

- Email (for non-urgent matters): Parents may send an email to familyfeedback@northsidechs.org. Messages will be passed on.
- In cases of emergency, parents may request direct contact through the office, and school staff will facilitate communication.

A written copy of this policy, including these communication methods, will be provided to all families at the beginning of each school year and upon enrollment.

VIII. Policy Review and Implementation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Academic Office and Chief Student Services Officer, in consultation with staff and stakeholders. Updates will be communicated to students and families in writing.