



Phone Free CB Policy & Family Resource Page

The Goals of the Phone Free School Day Policy:

Christian Brothers High School is creating intentional time and space for students to be fully present to their learning, their classmates, their teachers, and themselves. Rather than restricting technology, this policy is about creating opportunities for engagement, learning, presence, attention, friendships, and authentic human connection.

A phone-free school day is designed to help students:

- Increase engagement and focus in the classroom.
- Connect more meaningfully with friends and teachers.
- Support student mental health and well-being.
- Help students develop healthy habits around technology use.
- Encourage deeper participation in school life.
- Foster the Lasallian value of respect for the dignity and presence of every person.

The Family Handbook language for the 2026–27 school year reads:

Personal Device School Day Policy

Student phones, smartwatches, and smartglasses must be **powered off, stored away, and inaccessible** for the entire school day, from the morning bell at 8:30 a.m. (9:50 a.m. on Tuesdays) until the final bell at 2:40 p.m. (1:45 p.m. on Falcon Flex Thursdays).

For this policy, a smartwatch is any wearable device capable of sending or receiving messages, accessing the internet, making calls, recording audio or video, or otherwise functioning as an extension of a smartphone.

Headphones, earbuds, or other listening devices may be used with iPads (not phones) only at a teacher's direction in class. Although listening devices may be used with iPads during passing periods, break, and lunch, students are encouraged to engage with friends during these non-class times.

Student iPads continue to be used as instructional tools in the classroom under teacher supervision, consistent with current practice. The use of VPNs, hot spots, and cellular connected iPads to circumvent school-wide restrictions is prohibited.

Students who need to use their phone for urgent or emergency reasons may do so only in the Front Office or Counseling Office with permission from a school administrator or counselor.

Failure to follow this policy will result in progressive consequences. If a faculty or staff member observes a student using or accessing a phone, smartwatch or other unauthorized device during the school day, the adult will speak to the student directly about the violation of policy and the device will be brought to the Front Office by the student or collected by one of the Deans. The device will be secured and transferred to the Deans' Office where it can be retrieved after the final bell of the school day.

First violation: The device may be retrieved from the Dean's Office, and a verbal reminder of the policy is given. The first violation is documented. Parents are contacted.

Second violation: The device may be retrieved from the Dean's Office, and a lunch detention is assigned. The second violation is documented. Parents are contacted.

Third violation: Considered a Level 2 offense; The device may be retrieved from the Dean's Office and after school detention is assigned. The third violation is documented. A parent/guardian is required to pick up the device during school office hours and meet with one of the Deans of Students.

Subsequent violations: Implementation of a phone contract related to the use of personal devices. <End of Handbook language>

Frequently Asked Questions:

What should students do with their phones and smartwatches during the day?

Students should power off their phones, smartwatches, and smartglasses before the first class of the day and put them completely away. The healthiest option is for students to lock their devices in their lockers and retrieve them at the end of the day. Research shows physical distance from devices improves focus. Students may also keep their devices off and away in the main compartment of their backpack, completely out of sight. **Devices are not permitted to be stored on a student's person.**

If students can still access apps, online resources, and social media on their iPads, won't limiting phones and smartwatches just shift screen time elsewhere?

This policy is not intended to eliminate all technology or screen use during the school day. While student iPads can provide access to many of the same apps and online resources as smartphones, during the school day iPads are primarily instructional tools intended for learning, research, collaboration, and creation under teacher guidance. The CB Technology department has many restrictions on social media and other sites inappropriate for students during the school day. The use of VPNs, hot spots, and cellular connected iPads to circumvent school-wide restrictions is prohibited.

Why not continue to use classroom caddies?

In recent years, classroom phone caddies have been in use with varying degrees of success. Teachers report and experts agree that use of caddies can increase phone-checking behavior, as students repeatedly handle their devices during class transitions. Teachers report that simply anticipating access to one's phone near the end of class regularly causes students to lose focus. Occasionally, students have found ways around the caddy by using non-operable phones.

What if a student needs to make an emergency call or arrange transportation?

Students who need to use their phone for urgent or emergency reasons may do so only in the Front Office or Counseling Office with permission from a school administrator or counselor.

How should parents and students manage non-emergency contact with one another during the school day?

Students will continue to have access to email and iMessages on their iPads throughout the school day. Email is the preferred method for non-urgent communication. For urgent matters, parents should contact the Attendance Office or the main school phone number regularly answered by the receptionist during school hours. Staff can locate any student as needed.

Are exceptions available for medical needs?

Yes. Requests for phone or smartwatch use related to documented medical needs will be coordinated by the Deans of Students in coordination with the grade-level counselor. Each situation will be reviewed individually, and a plan will be created with the student and family to ensure that medical needs are met. Students seeking to use a device for medical reasons must provide a doctor's note indicating the necessity. To request phone use for a medical need, please complete the optional form in your student's Final Forms profile called "Student Cell Phone Medical Documentation" and one of the Deans will contact you.

Are exceptions available for educational needs?

After consultation with the Student Support Department, we are confident that iPads can meet all accommodations for educational needs. Further questions can be directed to April Melarkey, Director of Student Support Services.

How will communication work during emergencies such as a lockdown?

School safety experts agree that communication during emergencies is most effective when it comes directly from the school to families. Student phone or smartwatch use during these situations can interfere with safety procedures, create confusion, and spread misinformation. CBHS will use its emergency communication system to keep families informed. These expectations will be reinforced and practiced during emergency drills to ensure students understand when and how device use is permitted, helping maintain safety, calm, and clear communication throughout the school community.

Will faculty and staff follow the same rules?

Faculty and staff are committed to modeling responsible technology use for students. While adults may need to use phones or smartwatches for professional responsibilities, such as communicating with colleagues, accessing instructional resources, or managing school operations, they are expected to demonstrate limited and intentional device use during the school day. This modeling helps reinforce the school's device expectations, supports a focused learning environment, and demonstrates healthy boundaries around technology use for the entire school community.

What about school-sponsored field trips and retreats that happen during the school day?

Personal device expectations remain the same during school-sponsored field trips and retreats that take place during the school day. Students should plan to follow the same guidelines they follow on campus, with devices kept away unless explicitly permitted by a supervising adult for a specific purpose (such as travel logistics, safety, or an instructional activity). Faculty and staff will communicate in advance if a device is needed or allowed for a particular trip or retreat.

Are parents being asked to do anything at home?

Yes. We ask parents to help reinforce the purpose and benefits of this policy and to work with their students to establish a clear plan for communication during the school day, for example, using email instead of texting or calling. More broadly, we encourage families to reflect on their own approach to smartphone and smartwatch use, model healthy device habits, and explore available resources on technology and adolescent development. Engaging in ongoing family conversations about balance, responsibility, and presence helps ensure that every student can flourish academically, socially, and spiritually, while developing focus, positive relationships, and overall well-being.

Resources

Webinars/Podcasts

- [Angela Duckworth: Cell phones & self-control: How school leaders & family can support adolescents](#)
- [Ezra Klein & Jonathan Haidt: Raising a less anxious generation](#)
- [Denise Pope, Challenge Success: Balancing sleep and screens](#)
- [The Anxious Generation with Jonathan Haidt](#)

Articles

- [Johns Hopkins University: What's behind the ban on cellphones in K-12 schools](#)
- [Panorama Education: How do cellphones affect students in school?](#)
- [Journal of the Association for Consumer Research: Brain drain: The mere presence of one's own smartphone reduces available cognitive capacity](#)
- [Jonathan Haidt: The case for phone-free schools](#)
- [National Center for Education Statistics: More than half of public school leaders say cell phones hurt academic performance](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics: 12 tips for parents in the digital age](#)
- [Commonsense Media: How much screen time is OK for my kids?](#)

- [Child Mind Institute: How using social media affects teenagers](#)
- [Edutopia: Creating a family media agreement: How to have the conversation](#)

Books

- [The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt](#)
- [Stolen Focus by Johann Hari](#)
- [How To Break Up With Your Phone by Catherine Price](#)

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