

Phone-Free Schools

Phone-Free Schools—schools where cell phones are locked away from the first bell to the last bell of the school day—is a movement taking off in schools across the country. Schools that have implemented phone-free rules see more engagement with learning and more social interaction among students.

Six Reasons to Go Phone-Free Bell-to-Bell

Improves academic focus

Fewer distractions: Cell phones and other smart devices are a major distraction during class, **leading to decreased student attention and participation.**

Better academic performance: Studies show that **students perform better academically** without the distraction of cell phones.

Enhances social interaction

Encourages face-to-face communication: Interacting without phones promotes better social skills and strengthens peer relationships.

Reduces cyberbullying: Students feel more free to act authentically when there's no threat of being recorded, and the incidence of cyberbullying during school hours can be **significantly reduced.**

Boosts physical activity

Increases active breaks: Students are more likely to engage in physical activities during breaks, contributing to better physical health.

Improves classroom management

Minimizes disruptions: Teachers can maintain a more controlled and focused learning environment, with more learning time for all students.

Rules are easier to enforce: A schoolwide policy aids uniformity.

Enhances mental health

Reduces anxiety: The constant need to check phones can create anxiety. A cell-phone-free environment helps alleviate this stress.

Reduces isolation: Smartphone technology can make young people feel more isolated, which can lead to low self-esteem and depression.

Promotes responsibility and time management

Increases self-reliance: Students learn to manage their time and responsibilities without relying on digital reminders.

Encourages preparation: Without the crutch of cell phones, students must learn to come to class prepared with necessary materials.



Phone-Free Schools

Fairplay and Phone-Free Schools Movement have developed a comprehensive guide to advocate for phone-free schools. [Click here](#) for the Ambassador's Toolkit.

How Can We Advocate for a Phone-Free School?



START CONVERSATIONS

- **Conversations:** Find other parents and have conversations with them about the advantages of phone-free schools.
- **Connect interested parents:** Through your conversations, identify parents who share the same concerns. Meet with those parents to discuss a phone-free policy, and how they can start conversations with their child's teachers, principal, and school board.
- **Host a book group:** Jonathan Haidt's "The Anxious Generation" has a wealth of information for parents and teachers.



GATHER DATA AND RESEARCH

- **Present evidence:** Collect [data and research](#) that supports the benefits of a cell-phone-free school to present to other parents and school officials.
- **Compile testimonials:** Gather testimonials from teachers, students, and parents from [schools that have successfully implemented](#) a phone-free policy.



CREATE A PETITION

- **Petition for change:** Draft a petition (or use [this template](#)) outlining the reasons for a cell-phone-free policy. Gather signatures from parents, teachers, and community members.
- **Present to school administration:** Once a significant number of signatures are collected, present the petition to the school administration and school board.



UTILIZE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- **Newsletters and emails:** Send regular updates and newsletters to keep parents informed and engaged.
- **Join a group:** Groups like Fairplay's [Screen Time Action Network](#) are a terrific resource and support for anyone concerned about cell phone use in schools.



ENGAGE WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- **Attend board meetings:** Regularly attend school board meetings to voice concerns and present evidence supporting the phone-free policy.
- **Advocate for policy change:** Use the meetings as a platform to advocate for the implementation of a cell-phone-free policy. Use the comment periods to share evidence and petitions.