



Baldwin Union Free School District

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Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Baldwin Families,

We hope this message finds you well, and you are enjoying a restful summer.

We are writing to inform you about an important update regarding student use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day. [Governor Hochul](#) has enacted a new state law, “New York State Distraction-Free Schools,” requiring all New York State school districts to adopt a policy prohibiting these devices on school grounds, effective this school year.

The legislation aims to eliminate the use of cell phones and internet-connected devices during instructional time and notes that 95% of American teenagers own smartphones and receive an average of 250 notifications per day, negatively affecting their attention span, information retention, and energy levels in a school setting.

This policy is designed to create a more focused educational environment that will benefit our learners in several ways:

- **Increased Academic Performance:** Research shows that removing digital distractions can improve information retention and learning outcomes due to enhanced concentration.
- **Improved Mental Wellness:** Reducing exposure to social media during school hours can help protect students' mental well-being.
- **Enhanced Social Connections:** Students will engage in more meaningful face-to-face interactions with peers and teachers.

In adherence to the New York State law, the Baldwin Union Free School District must prohibit the use of internet-enabled devices, which includes but not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, Google smart glasses, personal laptops and tablets, AirPods, headphones, on school grounds **from the first to last bell**.

As a reminder, the Baldwin Union Free School District has already upheld a strict cell phone policy, in which cell phones have been completely prohibited for grades K-8 and restricted during class time for grades 9-12. This is now an official law.

Beginning the 2025-2026, our high school must extend the cell phone restriction to *all* personal internet-enabled devices during **non-instructional periods**, including lunch periods spent on the Baldwin campus, advisory periods and in between classes. Only district-issued devices, such as Chromebooks, will be permitted during the school day.

Students who do not comply with this new law will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Please note and speak to your child(ren) about the following adjustments to our current cell phone policy that must be implemented this school year:

- **Elementary Schools:** Just as it has always been, students cannot bring personal internet-enabled devices to schools.

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- **Baldwin Middle School:** Students must store all personal devices—such as cell phones, smartwatches, air pods, headphones, and laptops—in their lockers for the entire school day.
- **Baldwin High School and Baldwin and High School@Shubert:** Students will be issued Yondr pouches, which are secure, lockable pouches designed to create phone-free environments. Specific procedures are being finalized and will be communicated as soon as possible.

We understand the importance of staying connected with your child(ren) when needed. As always, families may call the school's main office or nurse's office. At the secondary level, each department and the guidance office also have dedicated phone lines for timely communication.

Your partnership is essential in helping us maintain a focused and respectful learning environment, free from unnecessary digital distractions. Please begin discussing this policy with your children now. It's crucial that they understand the expectations and possible consequences before the school year begins.

We recognize that this is a significant shift, particularly at the high school level, and we are committed to supporting students and families as we implement these changes. Please refer to the **FAQ** we created (available at www.baldwinschools.org/faqdevicerestrictions) and **Board Policy 5695** (available at www.baldwinschools.org/policyforelectronicdevices) for more information, including useful tips to help students with this change. In addition, we offer families free access to the **Qustodio app**, which allows parents/guardians to set up time limits, website filters, and screen-free periods. Families can add up to one free personal device per child. Visit www.baldwinschools.org/qustodio to learn more about this service and how to sign up before the start of the school year.

Should you have any additional questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your building principal.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a school environment that prioritizes learning, well-being, and preparing students for their future.

Sincerely,



Mr. Anthony Mignella
Superintendent of Schools

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