

Staunton City Schools' top priority is always to cultivate a safe and healthy environment for our learning community. In an effort to support the physical, emotional, and mental health of our students and staff, SCS has adopted an "Away for the Day" cell phone policy for students for the 2024-25 school year.

When students return on Aug. 7, they will be required to power off and put away their cell phones during classes to help minimize classroom distractions and support a positive learning environment for our teachers, students and staff.



How it Works

 **Middle School:** Students must turn off and stow away their cell phones from 8:15 AM to 3:40 PM (cell phones can be turned on at 3:40). This includes no phones at lunch or during class transitions. Phones will be stored in lockers or backpacks during class time. In the event of necessary contact with a parent or guardian, students will be allowed to use a classroom or office phone.

 **High School:** Students must turn off and stow away their cell phones during classes throughout the day. Classrooms will have storage pouches for students to stow away their phones until class ends. Since SHS students often have classes, jobs and extracurricular activities that take them off campus, they can access their cell phones during lunch and class transitions.

Away for the Day Benefits*

Research shows that students do better without phones, smartwatches and other personal devices at school. Here are some benefits of putting phones away for the day.

» It helps with school safety.

- We know one of the greatest concerns for parents is their child's safety and having quick access in the event of an emergency or school lockdown. Security experts agree that using a cell phone during a school emergency can be more harmful than helpful. They actually make students less safe. [Watch how.](#)
- We will always quickly and directly communicate with families concerning situations impacting student safety. [Check out the security measures we have in place to help keep our schools safe.](#)
- Limited student access to phones helps to minimize school conflicts and cyberbullying.



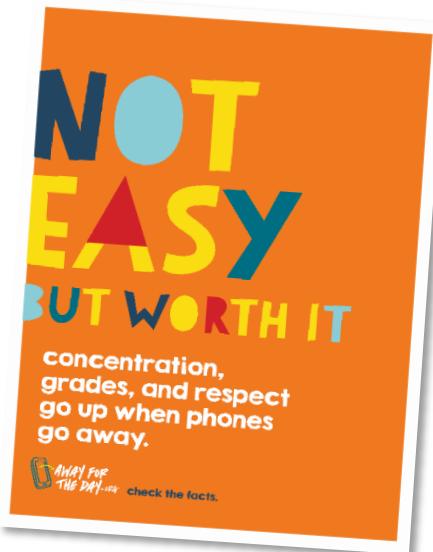
WATCH: Student cell phone use can be more harmful than helpful in a school crisis.

»» Students can focus and perform better in class.

- Studies show that students' academic performance actually decreases with the mere presence of a phone in class. Students can minimize distractions and stay focused on classroom activities and learning by keeping cell phones off and away.

»» Students have an opportunity to grow socially and emotionally.

- Students are encouraged to engage and interact with their surroundings instead of retreating into their cell phones, fostering a positive and interactive learning environment and the development of social skills.
- Using social media puts students at a higher risk of depression. Access to smartphones, texts and social media can magnify feelings of isolation and exclusion. Face-to-face time with friends and classmates counteracts the isolating, depressive feelings that come up when looking at a screen.



»» With emotional support, students can develop valuable skills.



- When parents help their children plan their days without text messages, they help them develop valuable executive-functioning skills.
- The frontal lobe, the brain's control center for impulse control, is not fully developed in middle school-aged children. When we say, "Kids just need to learn how to handle phone use in places like classrooms," we are setting many kids up for failure.

*Source: www.awayfortheday.org

More Resources

- [Away for the Day Campaign](#)
- [Research by Monitoring the Future](#)

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact your child's school administrators.

SCS will provide appropriate accommodations for students with a medical need for phone access during the school day with a doctor's note.