

— **CELL** —
PHONE-FREE
EDUCATION
CASE STUDY

**LOUISA COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

SUPERINTENDENT REGION 5

6	5,211	391	77
SCHOOLS	STUDENTS	TEACHERS	ADMINS

POLICY TYPE:

Ahead of the curve, Louisa County Public Schools has enforced an “off and away” cell phone policy since 2008. The policy applies to all six schools in the division. The policy runs “bell-to-bell”, meaning students are not permitted to use any personal electronic device (cell phone, smart watch, etc.) from the first bell signifying the start of the school day until the school day has concluded – including the time between class changes and during lunch. Students keep cell phones off and on their person in a pocket, backpack, or stowed away in a locker.



ENFORCEMENT:

When a student violates the cell phone policy, their phone is immediately removed. The student is allowed to retrieve their phone at the end of the school day from the office. For all subsequent offenses, the phone is removed and the student’s parent or guardian is required to pick up the device from the school.

— **THE** —
POLICY BREAKDOWN



Students are not permitted to use electronic devices on school property.



Students are permitted to wear smart watches but may only use them as a watch.



During any standardized testing, all electronic devices are gathered and placed in the front of the classroom.



For students who need their cell phone for medical purposes, documentation is required to outline the exception and authorize use.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT:

Prior to the start of the school year, administrators meet with teachers to overview all division and school policies, including the cell phone policy. This discussion lays the foundation for all schools in the division and ensures consistency from teacher to teacher, classroom to classroom.

Division and school leaders stress the importance of consistency in the policy.

A schoolwide meeting is held with students at both the start of the school year and the second semester to review behavior expectations. Administrators take time to not only overview the cell phone policy but explain to students **why it's important**.

Expectation setting with teachers and students at the start of every school year is a strategic way Louisa builds understanding and familiarity with policies and creates a culture of cell phone-free education.

TEACHER, PARENT, AND STUDENT RESPONSE

There is extremely positive sentiment towards the policy by teachers and parents. Teachers who are new to the division rave about the policy and teachers who leave to teach in divisions who do not have a policy in place report dissatisfaction with the lack of focus and constant distractions. Parents and many students are also extremely supportive of the policy.



TAKEAWAYS

Louisa County Public Schools serves as a strong example of the positive effects a longstanding, well-enforced policy can have.

DIVISION LEADERS ADVISE OTHER SCHOOL DIVISIONS FOCUS ON:

Constant Communication

Ensure your school community is aware of the expectations outlined in your cell phone policy by repeatedly communicating clear messages and expectations with all audiences such as students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators.

Staying Consistent

Once you have communicated your policy, you must stay consistent with enforcement. It's important to set your standard and get everyone moving forward in the same direction – and as one team – with consistent communication and expectations.