



Sabine Polak



Mileva Repasky

# Phone - Free Schools Movement Mission

To provide youth the freedom to excel academically and develop socially without the pressures and harms of phones and social media during the school day.



# Problematic phone use during the school day



**97%**

of students use phones during school hours



**35%**

of teens admit to using their phone to cheat



**43**

minutes per school day spent on social media, YouTube and gaming



**65%**

of students report they are distracted by devices



**1/3**

of teens report being exposed to pornography during the school day



**72%**

of HS teachers say phone distraction is a major problem

# NEA Poll: Social Media, Personal Devices and Mental Health



Over 90% of educators feel students' mental health is a serious issue at their school.



80% of members support prohibiting cell phone/ personal device usage during the entire school day.



[nea-member-polling-on-social-media-personal-devices-and-mental-health-june-20-2024.pdf](#)

# 2024 - The U.S. Surgeon General calls for warning labels on social media platforms



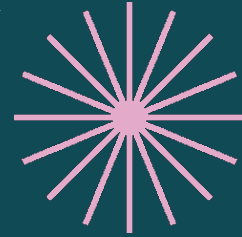
“Schools should ensure that classroom learning and social time are phone-free experiences.”

- Dr. Vivek Murthy

**The New York Times**

[Opinion | Surgeon General: Social Media Platforms Need a Health Warning - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

# Common Pushbacks to Phone - Free Policies



Parents need to reach their children during the day



Communication policies allowing access to phones in the main office.



Phones are essential for learning



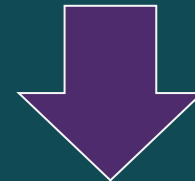
Highlight alternative tools designed for education without the distractions. (school-issued devices)



“Students need phones for emergency situations”



Evidence shows phones can hinder crisis management.



# Phones Compromise Student Safety During a Crisis

Distract students from following safety instructions

Could alert an intruder to their location

Spread rumors, causing confusion and delaying the response

Influx of parents to the school, interfering with evacuation efforts


High call volumes can overwhelm communication systems

For more information, refer to:  
[National School Safety and Security Services](#)





# PFSM Best Practice Definition



The best practice definition of a phone - free school is a "first bell to last bell" policy that requires all personal electronic devices (cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, AirPods, fitness trackers and Bluetooth connected headphones, etc.) are securely locked away and inaccessible for the entire school day.



# Storage Options



Phones are to be securely locked away and inaccessible for the entire school day in:

Phones cannot be stored:

- On the person
- Backpack
- Student's locker
- Secured baskets with phones stored in pencil pouches, padded envelopes, etc.
- Locked phone lockers
- Locked pouches such as Yondr

# Instructional Time ONLY Benefits

- More Engagement
- Increased Focus
- Improved Academics
- Less cheating



# All Day Benefits

- Social Emotional skills develop
- Mid-class absenteeism decreases
- All day absenteeism decreases
- Students practice independence
- Safety improves
- Teacher morale/retention goes up
- Classroom time benefits
- Mental health improves

# What are we hearing? The Anecdotal Evidence

Teachers report being ahead of schedule on their lesson plans because they aren't spending time policing phones

Students are completing classwork and assignments faster

Increase in books checked out from the libraries

Lunchrooms/hallways are markedly louder because students are having face-to-face conversations with their peers

School counselors are seeing a decrease in the rate of mental health related student visits

Administrators report spending significantly less time on discipline referrals

Peer conflicts are deescalating quicker as social skills improve

More after school club participation

# PFSM Research Program



GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

- Lack of robust, aggregated research on the effects of phone ban policies
- PFSM has partnered with researchers from the University of North Carolina to establish a research arm dedicated to evaluating these policies systematically.
- Research team comprised of scholars from the UNC School of Public Health & the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience.
- Collectively these researchers have extensive background in adolescent neurodevelopment, the impact of media devices on child -wellbeing, and program development.
- This partnership aims to address key gaps in understanding by fostering collaboration among researchers, aggregating data across diverse school contexts, and sharing findings to inform best practices and policy recommendations.
- Any school that has implemented or is interested in implementing a phone restriction policy and wishes for that policy to be rigorously evaluation.

# Phone-Free Schools Administrator Toolkit

Tools to implement a phone-free school environment.

## What's Included



### Supporting Data

#### SECTION 1:

Research Infographic  
Benefits



### Implementation Materials

#### SECTION 2:

Rollout Timeline  
Implementation Guide  
Model Phone-Free Policy



### Stakeholder Communications

#### SECTION 3:

Frequently Asked Questions  
Common Pushbacks  
Letters  
Surveys



Sign up to receive a free copy  
at [phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](https://phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)

# PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS AMBASSADOR TOOLKIT



LEARN. ENGAGE. THRIVE.

Comprehensive guide for parents, teachers, students, and concerned community members on how to advocate for a phone-free school environment.

Every student deserves a school where they can LEARN, ENGAGE AND THRIVE!



## WHAT'S INCLUDED



Educate Yourself



SECTION 1 [PGS 6 - 10]

Know the Impacts of Phones in Schools  
Research Your School and Neighboring Schools



Gather Support



SECTION 2 [PGS 11 - 16]

Finding Your Core Allies  
Organizing Your Core Group  
Gathering Support From the School Community



Take Collective Action



SECTION 3 [PGS 17 - 19]

Local Advocacy  
Next Level Advocacy

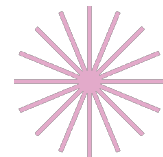
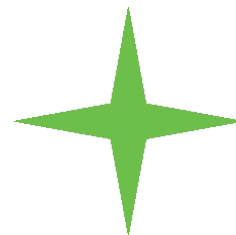


Resources



SECTION 4

A collection of templates and tools to support your advocacy efforts.



# PHONE

PHONE-FREE SCHOOLS MOVEMENT

The Phone-Free Schools Movement is dedicated to helping schools create healthier, more focused, and supportive learning environments by removing the distraction of phones. By supporting phone-free policies, you're contributing to the future success and well-being of students across our state.

For more information, visit [www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](http://www.phonefreeschoolsmovement.org) or email us at [info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org](mailto:info@phonefreeschoolsmovement.org)

## Learn



## Engage



## Thrive

