



Holland Central School District

District Office

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www.hollandcsd.org

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Dear Holland Parents/Guardians,

I hope you all had an amazing summer vacation and were able to spend some time resting and recharging for another great school year. The weather was in our favor and offered time for plenty of outdoor activities. As we wrap up our plans for the upcoming school year, I wanted to reach out to all our families to provide information on a change to our cell phone policy in our Code of Conduct.

It is no secret that technology has changed drastically in the last 20 years, transforming the realms of parenting and education. In those years, we have seen an increase of computer and cell phone usage which has led to many positive changes such as improved access to resources and information but has also had a detrimental effect on face-to-face communication, engagement, and misinformation. Both at home and in school, parents and educators are navigating an ever-evolving landscape, where children are facing a mental health crisis, shortened attention spans, and growing learning and social-emotional challenges.

With the constant change in education, our goal at Holland Central School District has been and will always be to positively influence the lives of our students. Our faculty and staff take on roles as mentors, guides, confidants, and sources of inspiration. The core of our mission is to cultivate active learners through a meaningful and relevant educational experience that prioritizes student well-being, builds resiliency, and prepares them to be engaged, contributing members of society.

Unfortunately, the prevalence of personal devices such as cell phones, earbuds, and smartwatches has jeopardized our ability to maintain a positive, inclusive, and safe environment for all students. These distractions have undermined the educational experience and the core values we strive to uphold. For parents and guardians who went to school in the 1980's and 1990's, imagine going to school and having your television, Gameboy, PlayStation, house phone, an entire encyclopedia set, and hundreds of folded paper notes from friends on your desk. It would be nearly impossible to learn with all of that in front of you and that is precisely what our students have with their cell phones today.

Our primary responsibility is the education and well-being of our students. Therefore, the Holland Board of Education has adopted an updated policy on cell phones in school. As such, we are implementing a bell-to-bell phone-free environment. This means that phones must be turned off and stored away in a student's locker for the entire school day.

Undoubtedly, you have seen neighboring school districts in Western New York that have adopted similar policies. These districts all report that they have observed positive changes, including increased focus,

attention, comprehension, and engagement, as well as reduced cheating and improved academic performance. Additionally, teachers and staff have reported better face-to-face peer interactions, less cyberbullying, fewer conflicts, and a decrease in social media-related issues. Students also experience lower levels of stress and anxiety.

We understand that you may have questions or concerns, so we will be sending out more detailed information via ParentSquare. We also recognize that there may be times when you need to contact your child during the school day. In such cases, parents and guardians can call the respective building's main office to have a message delivered to their student. Please note that exceptions will be made for students who require a cell phone for medical reasons.

A change like this can be difficult and we expect there to be some growing pains as we work out the day-to-day specifics. However, we are eager to continue to implement our District Mission and Vision to create the best educational experience possible for our students. Our children are the most important part of our future. As parents and guardians, you play a critical role in your child's life as well as being an integral part of our community. We look forward to our continued partnership with you to create an educational environment that fosters academic and social-emotional growth in our students.

Sincerely,

Eric Lawton
Superintendent

For the latest and up-to-date information, check our school website at www.hollandcsd.org. We will be continuing to use ParentSquare to streamline communication between the Holland Central School District and families. Please download the ParentSquare app to make communication easy. Our goal is for every family to join ParentSquare and engage with our school community. Please feel free to ask me any questions or check out this website for more information and resources: <https://bit.ly/HCS DPS>



iTunes App Store



Google App Store

Please note: Text messages from ParentSquare will contain a link that brings you to the Holland CSD ParentSquare website. You can reply to messages through the website or the app. You cannot reply via text message.