

Cell Phone Policies in Vermont Schools

Vermont Agency of Education

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Annual Technology Survey

- [The Annual Technology Survey](#) is required of all Vermont schools to collect important data about many aspects of the education technology landscape
- Data in these slides reflect responded from the 2023-24 school year
- During the 2023-24 school year 277 schools responded to the survey
- The 2024 survey results are pending

Cell Phone School Policies

Of 277 schools:

- 51% reported they had either a cell phone policy or rule in place
- 39% of the policies or rules were put in place between 2021-2024, earliest 2006
- 49% reported they did not have a cell phone policy or rule in place
- The majority of schools without a policy or rule in place indicated they were actively discussing putting such a policy in place

Cell Phone School Policies

Of 277 schools:

- 40 schools without a policy or rule in place indicated there was no need for a cell policy. The majority of those were elementary schools.
- Among the reasons cited for having no cell phone policy or limits were:
 - Mix of it not being a big problem with difficulty enforcing limits
 - Parent opposition
 - Has not yet been addressed by school board
 - Need determined by teacher
 - More pressing matters

Cell Phone School Policies

Of 277 schools:

- Most common place schools share cell phone policies, procedures, or rules is within the student handbook
- There were two approaches schools adopted in crafting cell phone restrictions:
 - Full-day restrictions: use of cell phones banned during the academic day
 - Schedule based restrictions: limits use of cell phones during the academic day but allows use at certain times of the day (passing periods, lunch). Restrictions may also be grade specific.

School Social Media

42 SU/SDs responded out of 54 (includes tech center SD) 12 non-responses

- 42 SU/SD block social media sites on school issued devices (all districts responding, 12 non-responses)
- Social media sites are blocked on student devices, not for teachers or staff
- 15 SU/SD block all social media sites
- Some districts block all social media at the elementary school level others allow select sites at the high school level. Responses indicated the blocking varies based on the school and age of the students.

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- Named social media sites blocked include Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, WeChat, Snapchat, X, Reddit, Discord
- Among the reasons cited for blocking social media were:
 - Distraction from instruction
 - Threat to personal & emotional safety of students
 - Concerns about data privacy
 - Influences negative behavior

School Social Media

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- Among the reasons cited for not blocking social media were:
 - Bans do not teach safe behavior online
 - Students use social media for collaboration & discussion
 - Allowing access helps student develop personal responsibility
 - Facebook is not blocked by district as it is used for official communication to families