

Dear Parents:

The Nashua School Board had a first reading of the proposed changes to the current cell phone and dress code policies at the regular monthly meeting on March 11, 2025. They would like your input on these proposed policies before the second reading at the regular monthly board meeting scheduled for April 8, 2025.

Cell Phone Policy 3630:

The significant change would be that students in grades 7-12 will no longer be able to use electronic devices during the lunch period. The board is also considering cell phone storage lockers to store the devices during the school day. The language in the handbook will also change to reflect the consequences for students caught in possession of the electronic devices.

The general consensus of the staff is in support of the changes in the policy for several important reasons.

First and foremost, these devices are significant distractions in the learning environment. Students often use their phones to text, check social media, or engage in non-educational activities, which disrupt their focus and hinder their academic performance. Removing these distractions can help students concentrate on their studies, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Secondly, the safety of students is a major concern. With constant access to communication through devices, students may be exposed to harmful content, cyberbullying, or online predators. Limiting device use in schools can help ensure that students remain in a safe and controlled environment where they are less vulnerable to these risks.

Lastly, the mental health of students is another critical consideration. The constant use of electronic devices has been linked to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress among students. Social media and other apps can contribute to feelings of inadequacy, peer pressure, and isolation. By reducing screen time during school hours, students can focus on building face-to-face relationships and develop healthier coping mechanisms.

While the school continues to utilize landlines for communication with families and between parents and students, this method remains an effective way to ensure important information is conveyed in a clear and reliable manner. Landlines are less prone to disruptions or distractions compared to mobile phones, which can be easily diverted by texts, calls, or apps. In emergencies or situations requiring immediate attention, landlines offer a stable and focused line of communication.

Additionally, by using landlines, schools can maintain a sense of control over communication, ensuring that messages are delivered in an appropriate and timely manner. Parents can reach

the school for urgent matters, and teachers can contact families for essential updates, all without the distractions or complexities associated with mobile devices.

In maintaining this tradition of landline communication, schools prioritize efficiency, safety, and a more direct connection between staff and families, while still ensuring students remain focused and free from unnecessary distractions during the school day.

In conclusion, banning the use of cell phones and other electronic devices during the school day is a step toward fostering a more focused, safe, and mentally healthy educational environment for all students.

Dress Code Policy 3224:

The language of the dress code policy does not have significant changes, however the language of the handbook does.

School Dress Code Policy

At Nashua Public Schools, we believe that a student's attire should support a respectful and focused learning environment while allowing for individual expression. This dress code applies to all students and is designed to ensure comfort, safety, and appropriateness for an educational setting without targeting any specific gender.

Purpose

The purpose of this dress code policy is to maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment that supports student success while respecting individual rights and expressions. This policy seeks to balance students' rights to express themselves with the school's responsibility to maintain a focused, non-disruptive educational environment.

General Guidelines

1. Clothing must be appropriate for a school setting – Attire should be neat, clean, and free of inappropriate language, symbols, or imagery, including references to violence, illegal substances, or anything that promotes discrimination or hate speech.
2. Coverage Requirement – Clothing must cover the torso, midsection, undergarments, and private areas at all times, whether standing, sitting, or moving.
3. Fit & Functionality – Clothing should allow for full participation in school activities. Excessively loose or tight clothing that interferes with movement or poses a safety concern is not permitted.
4. Footwear – Shoes must be worn at all times and should be appropriate for school activities. Open-toed shoes may not be allowed in certain classes (e.g., PE, science labs) for safety reasons.
5. Accessories & Attire That Disrupt Learning – Items that cause distraction, pose a safety risk, or disrupt the educational environment (such as excessively noisy jewelry, sunglasses indoors, or items with flashing lights) should not be worn.
6. Headwear – Hats, hoods, and other head coverings are not permitted indoors. Exceptions may be made for religious, cultural, or medical reasons.

Enforcement

- All dress code violations will be addressed in a respectful and discreet manner.
- Students will be given an opportunity to adjust their attire if it does not meet the guidelines.
- Consequences will focus on education and understanding rather than punishment.

Please email me at shoyer@nashua.k12.mt.us if you have any concerns or comments regarding the proposed changes.