



Burlington Township High School

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July 24, 2026

Dear Burlington Township High School Parents and Caregivers,

As we prepare for another exciting school year, Burlington Township High School remains committed to providing every student with a safe, engaging, and distraction-free learning environment where they can fully engage in learning and build meaningful relationships with their teachers and each other.. To support this goal, we are implementing a new policy regarding the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day.

In accordance with recently enacted New Jersey law and the New Jersey Department of Education's **2026 Guidance for Schools on Student Use of Internet-Enabled Devices**, **all school districts are required to adopt policies that prohibit the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day.** While this policy is required by state law, it also aligns with what educators and researchers know is best for students.

Personal Device Expectations

Beginning this school year:

- All personal internet-enabled devices—including cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, Meta smart glasses, tablets, earbuds, wired and wireless headphones, and similar devices—must be powered off and remain completely out of sight from the first bell until the final dismissal bell.
- BTHS will allow students to use their cell phones during their assigned lunch periods only to check messages and respond to personal communications before returning to class.
- Students will still **not** be able to make phone calls from the cafeteria.
- These devices may not be used during instructional time, while transitioning between classes or at any other time during the school day except as permitted by state law or district policy.
- Failure to comply with this policy, will result in disciplinary consequences as outlined in the student handbook.

I recognize that this represents a significant change for many students and families. Today's teenagers use their devices to communicate, access information, as a source of entertainment, and to connect with family and friends. Adjusting to these new expectations will take time, and I appreciate your partnership and support as we help students establish new routines.

Why This Change?

Our goal is not simply to limit technology –it is to maximize learning.

Research consistently shows that reducing personal device use during the school day can:

- Improve student attention and classroom engagement.
- Increase participation and face-to-face communication.
- Support stronger academic performance.
- Reduce distractions that interrupt learning.
- Promote students' overall social and emotional well-being.

Today's teenagers are growing up in a world of constant notifications, social media, and digital distractions, Research indicates that nearly 95% of high school students use social media, with many reporting frequent or near-constant use, and teens spend an average of seven hours each day engaged in entertainment screen time outside of schoolwork.

When students are fully present in the classroom, they are better able to collaborate with classmates, build relationships with teachers, participate in meaningful discussions, and develop communication and critical-thinking skills that prepare them for success beyond high school.

Student Lockers and Personal Devices

To support students in meeting this expectation, every Burlington Township High School student will be assigned a locker. Students are encouraged, but not required to store their personal electronic devices in their lockers when they arrive at school. While storing devices in lockers is not required, it is strongly recommended for students who find it difficult to resist checking their devices throughout the day.

Students who choose to keep their devices with them must ensure that they are powered off and remain completely out of sight throughout the school day, except during their assigned lunch period. Devices may not be visible, used, or accessed during instructional time, passing periods, or any other part of the school day unless specifically permitted by state law or district policy.

Staying Connected with Your Child

We understand that many families have become accustomed to communicating directly with their children throughout the day. Please know that student safety and family communication remain top priorities. To create an uninterrupted and focused learning environment we ask families to limit communication during instructional hours to matters that are urgent or time sensitive.

- **If you need to reach your child during the school day because of an urgent matter**—such as a family emergency or a transportation change that cannot wait until dismissal—please contact the Burlington Township High School Main Office. Our staff will promptly relay the message to your child.
- Students who need to contact a parent or caregiver during the school day may report to the Main Office only in emergency or urgent situations.
- For routine or non-urgent communication, students and families are encouraged to use the student's district-issued email account when appropriate. Students may review and respond to email during their assigned lunch period or after the school day has ended.
- By working together to limit routine messages during instructional time, we can reduce classroom interruptions and maximize learning for all students.

Moving Forward Together

We recognize that any significant change requires an adjustment. We firmly believe this initiative will strengthen the educational experience for all students. By reducing distractions and encouraging students to be fully present, we are creating classrooms where learning flourishes, relationships deepen, and students develop the focus, communication skills, and resilience they will need beyond high school.

At Burlington Township High School, our mission has always been to prepare students not only for graduation, but for success in college, careers, and life. We believe this initiative is another important step toward fulfilling that mission.

The success of this initiative depends on a strong partnership between school and home. By encouraging students to follow these expectations each day, we can work together to create classrooms where every Falcon has the opportunity to learn, connect and succeed.

Thank you for your continued partnership, support, and commitment to our students.. We look forward to another outstanding school year.

Sincerely,



Dr. Phil Brownridge
Principal
Burlington Township High School

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THE MORE OUR SPIRITS RISE, THE HIGHER OUR FALCON FLIES