

(HS)² Smartphone Policy 2026

For Students and Families

Why We Have This Policy

We love our students. And, because we do, we take seriously what the research and our own experience as teachers, students, and parents tell us: smartphones during the school day are not good for learning, wellbeing, or connection.

(HS)² exists to help students thrive in high school, college, and beyond. Part of that mission is supporting healthy habits around technology and social media. This policy is one way we do that.

A few things we know:

- Smartphone use during the school day is associated with reduced focus, lower academic performance, and increased anxiety.
- States and schools across the country are moving toward phone-free school environments, and the early outcomes are very positive.
- When we limit phone access, we need to offer something better in its place. (HS)² is that something better.

We developed this policy to align with the (HS)² mission while being realistic about students' lives and families' needs. It is shared with both students and families, so everyone understands the expectations from day one.

The Policy

During academic hours (classes, lunch, and study hall), students leave their phones in labeled sleeves in their dorm.

During non-academic hours (before breakfast, arts and actives, break, and after study hall), phones are available.

Exceptions may be made for family emergencies, learning experiences that require phones, or field trips. Any exceptions will be communicated to the (HS)² community in advance.

Daily Phone Schedule

Time	Phone Status
6:00 - 8:00am	✓ Phones Available (Before Breakfast)
8:00am - 2:50pm	⊘ Phone-Free Academics (Breakfast, A Period, B Period, Lunch, C Period)
3:00pm - 7:15pm	✓ Phones Available (Break, Arts + Actives, Dinner)
7:15pm - 9:00pm	⊘ Phone-Free Academics (Study Hall)
9:15pm - Onward	✓ Phones Available (After Study Hall)
10:30pm	Lights Out - We'll trust you with your phone, but if you are tired throughout the day, we may need to experiment with taking your phone at night for sleep purposes!

Expectations

We ask students and families to approach this policy in the spirit it is intended, as an investment in wellbeing and a fuller (HS)² experience.

- **Students:** Uphold the policy, support each other in doing the same, and lean into the discomfort. That's where growth happens.
- **During free time:** We encourage students to reflect on when phone use enhances their (HS)² experience versus when it pulls them away from it. Being present matters.
- **Families:** We appreciate your support. Knowing that your student's phone access is limited during academics and study hall helps us do our best work together.

Common Questions & Concerns

Concern	How We Address It
Safety	Students are always safe on the CRMS campus. Faculty and administrators are present throughout the day and have communication devices at all times.
Phone Security	During academic hours, phones are stored in students' dorms, which are locked and monitored by cameras.
Music	Students receive corded headphones to listen to music on their school Chromebooks.
Photos	During academic hours, students may ask faculty to take photos. Plenty of phone time outside academics means students can capture memories, too.
Family Contact	Students have phone access before breakfast, during break and actives, and after study hall each evening, which is plenty of time to stay connected with family.

The Research Behind This Policy

We don't ask students to give up their phones during the day without good reason. Here is some of what informs our approach:

- A growing body of research links heavy adolescent smartphone and social media use to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and difficulty concentrating.
- Studies show that even the presence of a phone on a desk (face down, silent) reduces available cognitive capacity.
- Schools and states that have implemented phone-free policies report improved academic engagement, better peer connection, and reduced conflict.

For more: Tech and Society Lab at NYU

(<https://as.nyu.edu/departments/psychology/research/tech-and-society-lab.html>) and the Map of State Policies Establishing Phone-Free Schools (<https://www.screenfreeschools.com/map>).

A note to families: We know this policy requires trust, and we don't take that lightly. Your student will have meaningful time to connect with you each day. If you ever have concerns during the summer, please reach out to us directly at aoppenheim@crms.org or nmalhotra@crms.org. We will also start a parent-only WhatsApp group for communication purposes!