

Promoting Mental Wellness for Students with Disabilities in Cell Phone-Free Schools: Guidance and Resources

This document offers resources available through the Virginia Department of Education to support the implementation of Virginia’s Executive Order 33: Establishing Cell Phone-Free Education to Promote the Health and Safety of Virginia’s K12 Students, emphasizing the benefits of a cell phone-free educational environment. This document provides guidance for addressing the unique needs of students with disabilities, including considerations for assistive technology and exemptions. Additionally, it includes tools to promote wellness, create safe and supportive school climates, and support parents and educators in fostering healthy device use and positive behavioral supports.

Information on the Implementation of Executive Order 33 that Pertains to Students who are English Language Learners and/or have Disabilities

- [Guidance for Cell Phone-Free Education Pursuant to Executive Order 33](#)
A document from VDOE that provides guidance and information to school divisions regarding Executive Order 33. Page 5 of this document provides information regarding possible exemptions to the cell phone ban for students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 Plan (Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*), or a Limited English Proficiency Plan, as well as the need for teams to discuss and document the requirement for technology if necessary.
- [School Leader Cell Phone-Free Learning Implementation Toolkit](#)
A toolkit, from the VDOE, that provides information for school leaders on the implementation of Cell Phone-Free Learning within schools. Page 29 discusses exemptions for students who have disabilities or are English learners and have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 Plan (Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*), or a Limited English Proficiency Plan, who require access to technology. This document suggests that teams consider and document the appropriate identification and use of school-based assistive technology (e.g., communication device, tablet) to support a student’s unique needs.

Resources for Creating Safe and Supportive Environments

- The Self, Health, and Relationship Education (SHaRE) Consideration Guide is designed to assist teams in considering the need for age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate instruction related to sexual health, self-restraint, self-protection, respect for personal privacy, and personal boundaries of others, also referred to as self, health, and relationship education (SHaRE).
 - [Self, Health, and Relation Education \(SHaRE\) Consideration Guide](#)
 - [Self, Health, and Relation Education \(SHaRE\) Guidelines](#)
- [Behavior Instruction and Intervention](#)
VDOE guidance on behavior management, Functional Behavior Assessments, and data-driven strategies for addressing student behaviors.

- [Using Functional Behavior Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments – March 2025](#)
VDOE guidance on using Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) to identify causes of challenging behaviors in students with disabilities and develop effective support strategies for positive behavior and academic success.
- [Text and Online Acronyms Parents Need to Know, Fact Sheet for Virginia’s Parents](#)
Parents and kids often text in different “languages,” with children using acronyms for quick communication. Some are harmless, but others can be concerning—this fact sheet highlights key acronyms to watch for on your child’s phone.

Resources to Guide Team Through Discussions Regarding Assistive Technology Considerations

- Assistive technology (AT) can help ensure that all students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) by allowing access to the general curriculum and settings, providing opportunities for meaningful social interactions, and facilitating progress toward their educational goals. Assistive technology can significantly increase and support student independence, communication, self-expression, self-esteem, and overall quality of life.
 - [VDOE’s Assistive Technology Information Page](#)
 - [VATTS: Consideration and Assessment Guidance Document](#)
 - [Virginia AT Network’s Assistive Technology Tools in Schools – 2nd Edition](#)



This product was created by the Family Engagement Network (FEN), through a grant provided by the Virginia Department of Education and managed by the Center for Family Involvement at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University.

