

House Bill 1009

By: Representatives Hilton of the 48<sup>th</sup>, Jones of the 47<sup>th</sup>, Donatucci of the 105<sup>th</sup>, Reeves of the 99<sup>th</sup>, Silcox of the 53<sup>rd</sup>, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to  
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to require local school systems and public schools  
3 to enact policies and procedures for use of personal electronic devices at school and school  
4 sponsored events by students in grades nine through twelve; to revise provisions relative to  
5 permissible student use of personal electronic devices; to revise a definition; to provide for  
6 related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other  
7 purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and  
11 secondary education, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-324.8, relating to use of  
12 personal electronic devices during school day by students, as follows:

13 "20-2-324.8.

14 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

- 15 (1) 'Access' means viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the  
16 purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, listening to music, or any  
17 other function commonly associated with personal electronic devices.
- 18 (2) 'Bell-to-bell' means the period beginning with the first bell signaling the start of  
19 instructional time and ending with the final bell signaling the conclusion of the school  
20 day and shall include all scheduled instructional time, breaks, transitions, assemblies, and  
21 other school related activities occurring between the start and end of the school day.
- 22 (3) 'Distraction-free education' means a learning environment where student access to  
23 personal electronic devices is ~~restricted~~ prohibited to minimize distractions, improve  
24 academic outcomes, and increase meaningful interactions and focused learning  
25 experiences.
- 26 (4) 'Personal electronic device' means any portable electronic device capable of  
27 transmitting, receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media. Such term  
28 includes, but is not limited to, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, ~~e-readers~~, headphones,  
29 and other devices with functionalities such as wireless communication, internet access,  
30 messaging, video recording, gaming, social media access, or data transmission.
- 31 (5) 'School day' means the bell-to-bell period for students receiving instruction on a  
32 school campus. Such term shall not apply to students receiving virtual or remote  
33 instruction away from a school campus.
- 34 (6) 'School equipment' means any computer or computer networking equipment,  
35 technology or technology related device or service, or communication system or service  
36 that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by a local board of  
37 education, local school system, or public school and that is used for transmitting,  
38 receiving, or accessing communications, data, or media.
- 39 (b)(1) Beginning no later than July 1, 2026, no public school student in kindergarten  
40 through grade eight shall be permitted to access personal electronic devices during the  
41 school day, except as otherwise provided in this Code section or required by law.

42 (2) Beginning no later than July 1, 2027, no public school student in grades nine through  
43 12 shall be permitted to access personal electronic devices during the school day, except  
44 as otherwise provided in this Code section or required by law.

45 (c) By January 1, ~~2026~~, each year, each local school system and public school shall adopt,  
46 and revise as appropriate, policies and procedures that, at a minimum:

47 (1) Prohibit bell-to-bell access to personal electronic devices by students in kindergarten  
48 through grade ~~eight~~ twelve, subject to exceptions provided for by law;

49 (2) Establish appropriate methods for storing students' personal electronic devices,  
50 including, but not limited to, a student's locker, a locked pouch, or a designated place in  
51 the classroom;

52 (3) Establish clear procedures for off-site events or activities, including all school  
53 sponsored events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events,  
54 and other instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds, including, but  
55 not limited to, participation in the dual enrollment program, work based learning  
56 programs, and apprenticeship programs;

57 (4) Establish clear communication protocols that:

58 (A) Facilitate all emergency communication through school emergency communication  
59 management systems and coordinated by school personnel;

60 (B) Require parents or guardians who need to communicate with their student during  
61 the school day to contact the school directly; and

62 (C) Communicate rules for school personnel and sponsors of all school sponsored  
63 events and field trips, daily transportation, athletic and extracurricular events, and other  
64 instructional opportunities that do not occur on school grounds; and

65 (5) Provide that any student found in violation of such policies and procedures during  
66 the school day shall be subject to progressive consequences in accordance with the local  
67 school system's or public school's student code of conduct, including, but not limited to,

68 verbal warnings, confiscation of personal electronic devices, parental notification, and  
69 other actions as deemed appropriate.

70 (d) A student whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or  
71 medical plan explicitly mandates the use of a personal electronic device for medical or  
72 educational purposes shall be permitted to access the device as necessary to fulfill the  
73 requirements of the respective program or plan.

74 (e)(1) Each local school system and public school shall:

75 (A) Implement appropriate monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure  
76 compliance with policies and procedures established pursuant to this Code section,  
77 which may include, but need not be limited to, assigning designated school personnel  
78 to oversee implementation and adherence to such policies and procedures, conducting  
79 periodic audits of personal electronic device storage, and regularly reviewing  
80 enforcement practices;

81 (B) Ensure that parents, guardians, and students are informed of such policies and  
82 procedures through student and family handbooks, student codes of conduct, school  
83 public websites, and other common communication channels; and

84 (C) Regularly review the effectiveness of such policies and procedures and adjust as  
85 necessary to ensure its continued alignment with educational goals and student  
86 well-being.

87 (2) Each local school system and public school is encouraged to host student and parent  
88 engagement activities designed to promote distraction-free education through personal  
89 electronic device-free, independent play and learning, including, but not limited to,  
90 family workshops, question and answer sessions, town halls, mindfulness or enrichment  
91 sessions, screen-free challenges, and participation in initiatives that encourage students  
92 to engage in meaningful, personal electronic device-free play and activities.

93 (f) The Department of Education shall provide local school systems and public schools  
94 with guidance and technical support for the effective implementation and enforcement of  
95 the provisions of this Code section.

96 (g) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed or applied to prohibit or limit a local  
97 school system or public school from providing school equipment, including, but not limited  
98 to, laptops and tablets, for student use for educational purposes.

99 (h) This Code section shall not be subject to waiver pursuant to Code Section 20-2-82 for  
100 a strategic waivers school system, Code Section 20-2-2063.2 or 20-2-2065 for a charter  
101 system, Code Section 20-2-2065 for a charter school, Code Section 20-2-2096.3 for a  
102 completion special school, or Code Section 20-2-244."

103 **SECTION 2.**

104 This Act shall become effective December 31, 2026.

105 **SECTION 3.**

106 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.