



Update on Distraction Free Schools Policy and First Day of School

August 13, 2025

Dear East-West Families,

As we shared last week, Governor Hochul signed [a new law](#) for **Distraction-Free Schools**. The law requires schools to collect or lock cell phones, tablets, game consoles, smart watches, and other personal internet-connected devices. Importantly, no cell phones can be used during the school day, including during lunch. All NYC Public Schools are required to implement the law by the first day of school, September 4, 2025.

School Implementation

Summary: At the East-West School, we will primarily use a **Lock and Keep** system:

- 1) Your child will enter the school building, place his/her phone in a **clear case**, and close the lock.
- 2) Your child's teacher or school staff will unlock the phone at the end of his/her school day.
- 3) Your child will be issued one case to use for the entire school year.
- 4) Your child must bring the case to school every single day.

You will be able to contact your child at any time by contacting the Main Office or Parent Coordinator, and we will make sure that you are able to communicate with your child.

Please read the attached full policy for all details of our implementation, and note the \$10 replacement fee.

To ensure smooth implementation of the new policy, it is essential that your child bring his/her case to school every day. We ask that you remind your child daily to bring the case until it becomes routine.

We recommend that your child avoid bringing any personal tablet, game system, or laptop, as those will be required to be collected and stored by the school for the entire school day.

First Day of School

The first day of school is Thursday, September 4, 2025.

School starts at 8:00 AM. This means that all students should plan to enter the school building before 8:00 AM. The first day for zero period classes is Tuesday, September 9 (*for some 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students- please check your child's paper program in September to confirm if your child has a Zero period class.*)

Entry and Student Programs

Grades 6-8:

- Students will line up on Juniper Ave next to our Auditorium ramp entrance.
- Students will begin to enter the Auditorium at 7:35 AM. Students will receive their school program (class schedule) in the Auditorium at 8:00 AM.
- Students will receive a locking case for cell phones in their Period 1 classroom.

- Students with any personal tablet, laptop, or game console will have the device collected. It will be returned to your child at the end of the school day.

Grades 9-12:

- Students should enter via the Main Lobby starting at 7:30 AM.
- HS students will receive their program in the Lobby.
 - Grades 9-10: Students will wait in the Auditorium Rear after receiving their program.
 - Grades 11-12: Students will wait in the Gymnasium after receiving their program.
- Students will receive a locking case for cell phones in their Period 1 classroom.
- Students with any personal tablet, laptop, or game console will have the device collected. It will be returned to your child at the end of the school day.

Uniform:

All students are expected to wear the school uniform shirt from the first day of school. If your order from [Ideal Uniform Company](#) has not yet arrived by September 4, please send your child to school with a note and a copy of the order receipt.

Dismissal:

Unlocking: Period 8 teachers will unlock students' phone cases at the end of the school day. Any student who had a device collected and stored by the school can pick up their device at the Staircase D entrance, near the student bathrooms (for any personal tablet, game system, laptop, or other personal internet-connectable device.)

Exits: East-West students exit the school building primarily via the Geranium Ave exit door.

Student Absences:

If your child will be absent from school, please email mychildisabsent@ewsis.org. Include your child's name, the date of absence, and the reason for absence.

All families will receive automatic phone calls if your child is absent, regardless of the reason. If you believe that you have received an absence phone call in error, please call the school at 718-353-0009 and dial 02.

NYC Schools Account:

Please be sure that you have access to your NYC Schools Account. Please review your phone number, mailing address, and email address to ensure that they are correct. This will ensure that you receive all communication from the school. You can also view your child's Spring 2025 state exam scores (Grades 6-8) Regents scores (Grades 9-12) directly through your account. If you need help accessing your account, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Lam, at alam14@schools.nyc.gov or 718-353-0009 x4234.

We look forward to welcoming your child back to our Summer Bridge program on August 27 (grades 6-8) or August 28 (grades 9-12) from 9:00 AM- 12:45 PM and on September 4th for the first day school.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Lam, at alam14@schools.nyc.gov or 718-353-0009 x4234.

Sincerely,

David Bantz
Principal



August 2025 School Cell Phone & Device Policy

Purpose:

To create an environment conducive to learning by minimizing distractions caused by cell phones and other personal internet-enabled electronic devices, ensure the safety and focus of all students during school the school day, and follow [Education Law §2803](#), effective August 1, 2025, all New York State schools are required to adopt a policy that prohibits the use of personal internet-enabled devices during the school day on school grounds. An "internet-enabled electronic device" is defined as an electronic device capable of connecting to the internet and enabling the user to access content on the internet. Examples of such devices include cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, iPads, and portable music and entertainment systems.

Policy Statement:

Students will not be permitted to use or access their personal internet-enabled electronic devices upon arrival at school until the end of the school day. The school day is defined as the period from the moment students enter the school building until the last class of the day ends, including during lunch. The school day generally starts at 8:00 AM and ends at 2:16 PM. Students will continue to be able to use school-issued devices during the school day.

1. STORAGE

- Upon arrival, students must power off their devices.
- Students will place their devices in their NuGerm case and lock it in front of school staff.
- Students will store the locked case in their bag or locker during the school day.
- At the end of the school day, students will unlock their case in their Period 8 classroom or next to Staircase D, outside the student bathrooms.
- Students will remove their device(s) and take home their unlocked pouches.
- Students who leave school early with a parent can unlock their case in the Main Office.
- **In the event that the NuGerm case or other pouch is lost or damaged, the school will require a \$10 fee for a replacement.**
- Students who do not bring their NuGerm case to school will have their phone collected and stored upon entry, and returned after school in the Main Office.
- Students who arrive late to school may have their device collected and stored upon entry and returned after school in the Main Office.

2. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

- In case of emergency or exigent circumstances, parents or guardians can call our Parent Coordinator at 718-353-0009 x4234 or our Main Office at 718-353-0009 x02 and we will connect you to your child.

- In case of a school emergency or exigent circumstances, the school will use GAMA to communicate information to parents or guardians.

All parents should ensure that your phone number and e-mail address are up to date to ensure that you receive any emergency communication that comes from the school.

3. **EXCEPTIONS**

- Parents/guardians must contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Lam, at 718-353-0009 x4234, or alam14@schools.nyc.gov, if a student requires an exception for reasons such as: medical monitoring/treatment (for example to monitor blood sugar or other similar circumstances), if student is a caregiver, or where otherwise required by law.
- The principal/designee may authorize use for an educational purpose.
- Exceptions will be processed and approved within five school days.
- *Note:* all students who are entitled to translation and interpretation services will have access to school-issued translation devices.

4. **DISCIPLINE**

- Students who use electronic devices in violation of the NYCPS [Discipline Code](#), the school's policy, Chancellor's Regulation A-413, and/or the NYCPS [Internet Acceptable Use and Safety Policy](#) ("IAUSP") will be subject to progressive discipline. This means that the disciplinary responses will escalate based on the nature and frequency of the violation. As provided in the State law, a student may not be suspended solely on the grounds that the student accessed a personal internet-enabled device in violation of school policy. Repeated incidents of insubordination (i.e. refusal to surrender or store device) **may** result in a suspension **if approved** by the Office of Safety and Youth Development.
- Students with repeated infractions may be required to have their device collected by school staff upon entering the school building. Devices will be returned after school.

5. **OTHER:** If Damaged or Stolen

- In the unlikely event that an electronic device is stolen or damaged at school, parents should notify the school and can submit a claim to the Comptroller's Office. More information on submitting a claim is available on the [Comptroller's webpage](#).

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a focused and productive learning environment. If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding these policies, please do not hesitate to contact our Parent Coordinator, Ms. Lam, at 718-353-0009 x4234, or alam14@schools.nyc.gov