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August 6, 2026

Dear Windsor Public Schools Families,

One of my greatest responsibilities as your Superintendent is making decisions that are in the best interest of our students, even when those decisions require us to change long-standing practices.

Over the past year, we have taken a hard look at the role personal electronic devices play during the school day. We have listened to teachers, administrators, students, and families. We have reviewed the growing body of research, and this week the Connecticut State Board of Education released new statewide guidance that strongly supports creating cell phone-free learning environments from the beginning of the school day until dismissal. I am proud to say that Windsor Public Schools is already moving in that direction.

Beginning this school year, all Windsor Public Schools will follow an **"Away for the Day"** expectation for personal electronic devices across **all grade levels, PreK through Grade 12.**

This means that cell phones, smart watches, smart glasses, earbuds, headphones, tablets, and other personal electronic devices must remain put away, turned off and not be used during the school day unless specifically authorized by school staff or required as part of an approved accommodation.

This is about much more than phones. It is about giving our students the opportunity to be fully present. It is about protecting instructional time. It is about helping students reconnect with one another through conversation instead of screens. It is about reducing distractions, improving focus, strengthening relationships, and creating learning environments where every child has the opportunity to succeed.

We know technology is a permanent part of our lives, and this decision is not about pretending otherwise. Our responsibility as educators is to teach students how to develop healthy habits and appropriate boundaries with technology. School should be a place where students are engaged with their teachers, collaborating with classmates, asking questions, solving problems, and building the social skills they will need long after they leave Windsor Public Schools.

Families often ask, "What if I need to reach my child during the school day?" The answer is the same as it has always been. If there is an emergency or you need to get an important message to your child, simply contact your school's main office and we will make sure your child receives the message promptly. Likewise, if your child needs to contact you during the day, they will always be able to do so through the school office.

Our expectation will be consistent across the district, but the way each school responds when students do not meet those expectations will be developmentally appropriate. A kindergarten student and a high school student require different levels of support and accountability. Each school will communicate its specific procedures and consequences with families before the start of the school year.

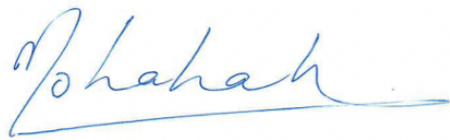
As always, students with documented educational, medical, or accessibility needs that require the use of a personal device will continue to receive those accommodations in accordance with their individualized plans.

I know that for some families this represents a significant change. Change often asks all of us to adjust, and I never make those decisions lightly. This is not about taking something away from our students. It is about giving something back. Giving them back their attention. Their conversations. Their friendships. Their curiosity. Their ability to focus without constant interruptions. Every minute of learning matters, and every interaction with a teacher or classmate matters. Those are things no device can replace.

I truly believe this is one of the most important steps we can take to strengthen our schools and better prepare our students for success, not only academically, but socially and emotionally as well. Thank you for your partnership, your trust, and your continued support as we work together to create the very best learning environment for every child in Windsor Public Schools.

Together, we will continue putting students first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "N. Hady", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Noha Abdel-Hady
Superintendent of Schools