



PULSE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Cell Phones in Schools

Overview

This survey is for students aged 13-18. We will ask about your use of digital devices (e.g., smartphones, laptops, tablets, headphones) at school, your school's policies around these devices, and how all the above impact your experiences as a Student.

About the Survey

This survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to finish.

- All information we collect will be completely anonymous.
- There are no known risks associated with participating in this study.
- For completing this survey, you will be compensated according to the agreement in place with the survey company you've signed up with.
- Participants will only be compensated for completing this survey once.
- There are "attention check" questions throughout this survey to avoid bot responses and invalid responses. Responses that fail these checks will not be compensated and will be reported to your survey company. Failed responses may also be logged on your profile.
- The survey is completely voluntary and you are free to skip survey questions you don't want to answer. Please keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. What counts is your opinion.
- All responses will be kept confidential. Data that combines everyone's answers will be reported. Direct quotes from open-ended responses may be reported; however, no identifiable information will be included.
- You are free to withdraw from the survey any time up until the "Submit" button is pressed at the end of the survey. Because this is an anonymous survey, once results are submitted it is not possible to withdraw.

About the Research

- If you are under the age of 18, we encourage you to tell your parent or guardian about your participation in this survey.
- The data gathered will be analyzed by researchers from the Digital Wellness Lab at Boston Children's Hospital. The results may be presented at academic conferences or published in academic journals. All data will be securely stored at Boston Children's Hospital.
- If you have general questions about this research, you or your parent can contact David Bickham, PhD, by calling 617-355-6031 or emailing david.bickham@childrens.harvard.edu.
- If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, any research-related concerns or complaints, or if you or your parent(s) want to speak with someone other than the researchers, you can call the IRB Office at (617) 355-7052.

By selecting the “next button”, you acknowledge that you have read the above statements, that you may withdraw from the study at any time, and that you consent to participate in this study.

If you do not agree to participate, please exit this survey now.

Screener & Demographics

Page Exit Logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic IF: (#1 Question "Are you between the ages of 13-18?" is one of the following answers ("No") OR #2 Question "How old are you? " is less than "13") OR #2 Question "How old are you?" is greater than "18") THEN: Disqualify and display: "Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey." [Redirect]

1) Are you between the ages of 13-18?*

Yes

No

2) How old are you? (Please only use numbers)*

Page Exit Logic: Not in US IF: #3 Question "Which country do you currently live in?" is not one of the following answers ("United States") THEN: Disqualify and display: "Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey." [Redirect]

3) Which country do you currently live in?*

4) Which state do you live in?*

5) What is your gender identity?

Girl

Boy

Other (e.g. Non-binary)

Prefer not to answer

6) Do you identify as transgender?*

Yes

No

Prefer not to answer

7) What is your race/ethnicity?*(check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Middle Eastern or North African
- White
- Other - Write In:
- Prefer not to answer

8) Have you been diagnosed by a doctor with any of the following disorders?*(select all that apply)

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD)
- Learning disorder
- Eating disorder
- Other mental or behavioral disorder not listed
- None of the above
- Prefer not to answer

Page Exit Logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic IF: #9 Question "What grade are you currently in?" is one of the following answers ("None of the above") THEN: Disqualify and display: "Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey." [Redirect]

9) What grade are you currently in?*

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| 5th grade | 10th grade |
| 6th grade | 11th grade |
| 7th grade | 12th grade |

8th grade None of the above
9th grade

Page Exit Logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic IF: #10 Question "What kind of school do you attend?" is one of the following answers ("Homeschool","College/University") THEN: Disqualify and display: "Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey." [Redirect]

10) What kind of school do you attend?*

Traditional public school (part of a larger district)
Magnet school (uses an exam, application, or lottery system for admission)
Charter school (independent public school)
Religious private school
Secular (non-religious) private school
Private boarding school (students live at the school)
Homeschool
College/University
Other - Write In (Required):*
Prefer not to answer

11) How would you describe the setting of your school?*

City
Suburb
Town
Rural
I'm not sure

12) What grades/ages of students does your school include?*

6th-8th Grade ("Middle School")
9th-12th Grade ("High School")
K-8
K-12

Other (please specify):*

13) What is the highest degree of education one of your parents has obtained?*

No degree

High school degree or GED

Associate's degree (e.g., community college, trade school, etc.)

Bachelor's degree (4-year college or university)

Master's degree

PhD/MD/JD or other advanced degree

I'm not sure

Prefer not to answer

Page Exit Logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic IF: #14 Question "Do you own a cell phone (e.g., smartphone, flip phone)?" is one of the following answers ("No") THEN: Jump to page 5 - School Experiences. Flag response as complete.

14) Do you own a cell phone (e.g., smartphone, flip phone)?*

Yes

No

Think about where you live and answer the following questions (Questions 15-20) about your household:

15) Does your family own a car, van, or truck?

Yes, one

Yes, two or more

No

16) Do you have your own bedroom for yourself?

No

Yes

17) How many computers do your family own (including laptops and tablets, not including game consoles and smartphones)?

None

One

Two

More than two

18) How many bathrooms (room with a bath/shower or both) are in your home?

None

One

Two

More than two

19) Does your family own a dishwasher at home?

No

Yes

20) How many times did you and your family travel out of the United States for a holiday or vacation last year?

Not at all

Once

Twice

More than twice

General Device Use

For these questions, please think about how you use your smartphone overall, whether it is at home, at school, or somewhere else.

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists

21) How do you feel about the amount of time you spend using your smartphone?

- Nowhere near enough time
- Not quite enough time
- Just the right amount of time
- A little too much time
- Way too much time

Logic: Hidden unless: #22 Question "Do you use any tools or apps to manage your smartphone use (e.g., screen time limits, do not disturb mode)?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

22) Do you use any tools or apps to manage your smartphone use (e.g., screen time limits, do not disturb mode)?

- Yes
- No

23) Which specific tools, apps, settings, or other strategies do you use to manage your smartphone use? (You may list as many as you'd like).

Device Use at School

The following questions will ask specifically about your use of smartphones and other digital devices at school. By “at school”, we specifically mean on school grounds during regular hours, not including exceptions like after-school events or field trips.

24) How much time do you typically spend using your phone when you’re at school?

(Please specify your answer in hours. For example, for 2 hours and 30 minutes, you would write 2.5.)

25) Which of the following do you use your phone for when you’re at school?

	Yes	No
Using social media (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok)		
Watching videos for fun (e.g., YouTube, Netflix)		
Working on a school assignment		
Studying for a quiz/test (e.g., flashcards, study guides)		
Coordinating logistics (e.g., transportation, after-school activities)		
Communicating with friends/family (e.g., texting, group chats)		
Checking school apps (e.g., Google Classroom, Canvas)		
Listening to music		
Playing games		
Taking photos/videos		
Checking the news or weather		

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists

26) Do you have a school-issued device for your own use, such as a laptop (e.g., Chromebook) or tablet (e.g., iPad)?

Yes, while I'm at school

Yes, but only at home

Yes, to use both at school and at home

No, I don't have access to any school-issued devices

Logic: Hidden unless: #26 Question "Do you have a school-issued device for your own use, such as a laptop (e.g., Chromebook) or tablet (e.g., iPad)?" is one of the following answers ("Yes, while I'm at school", "Yes, to use both at school and at home")

27) How do you use your school-issued device during the school day?

	Yes	No
Using social media (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok)		
Watching videos for fun (e.g., YouTube, Netflix)		
Working on a school assignment		
Studying for a quiz/test (e.g., flashcards, study guides)		
Coordinating logistics (e.g., transportation, after-school activities)		
Communicating with friends/family (e.g., texting, group chats)		
Checking school apps (e.g., Google Classroom, Canvas)		
Listening to music		
Playing games		
Taking photos/videos		
Checking the news or weather		

School Experiences

For the following questions, please think about your experiences during this school year (2024-2025).

28) To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements about your experiences in the classroom?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am easily distracted.					
I am able to pay close attention to one thing for a long period of time.					
I can act in class the way my teacher wants me to.					
I'm interested in what I'm learning in school.					

29) What is your current grade-point average (GPA)? Please provide a number on a 4.0 (unweighted) scale. (If your school doesn't calculate a GPA this way, you aren't sure, or you would prefer not to share this information, you may skip this question).

30) My grades are...

- A lot lower than they used to be
- A little lower than they used to be
- Neither lower or higher than they used to be
- A little higher than they used to be
- A lot higher than they used to be

31) I'm absent for part or all of the school day...

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often

Almost Always

32) Does your school have a digital literacy curriculum covering any of the following topics?

	Yes	No
Balanced/Healthy Screen Use (e.g., managing screen time, digital wellbeing, self regulation)		
Digital/Internet Safety Skills (e.g., privacy, online risks)		
Critical Thinking/Evaluation (e.g., recognizing misinformation, fact-checking, media bias)		
Collaboration & Creativity (e.g., responsible content creation, respectful online interactions)		

Page Exit Logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic IF: #33 Question "This is an attention check question. Please select C as the answer choice." is not one of the following answers ("C") THEN: Disqualify and display: "Sorry, you do not qualify to take this survey." [Redirect]

33) This is an attention check question. Please select C as the answer choice.*

- A
- B
- C
- D

34) Do you think students being distracted by their phones is an issue at your school?

- Not an issue at all
- Small issue
- Moderate issue
- Major issue

35) To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements about your overall experiences at school?

	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel disconnected from the people/students around me.					
I see people/students as friendly and approachable. We have a nice class spirit/community.					
In our school the teachers listen to the students.					
The teachers treat me fairly.					

36) During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied on school property?

(Bullying is when 1 or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again. It is not bullying when 2 students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way).

Yes

No

37) During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied?

(Count being bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media.)

Yes

No

38) What portion of your lunch break do you usually spend on your phone?

None of the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

All the time

Half the time

School Policies

The following questions will focus on school policies around the use of smartphones and other digital devices. By “policy”, we are referring only to school-wide regulations that apply across multiple (but not necessarily all) grades and/or classrooms. If individual teachers/staff have specific rules or expectations around where and when you can use devices, this would not qualify as a policy. For example, if your school does not allow phones in any classroom, this would be a policy, whereas one teacher requiring students to use a “phone hotel” would not count.

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists

39) Which best describes your school's current mobile phone policy?

Mobile phones are not allowed on school premises

Mobile phones are allowed on premises, but must be turned off and locked away all day (e.g., Yondr pouches, in the main office).

Mobile phones are allowed, but must be put away or kept in “mobile phone hotels” during class

Mobile phones are allowed, but should always be silent/off and not disturb class

No school-wide policy, it depends on the teacher/class

No policies or rules around mobile phones

Other (please specify):*

I don't know

Logic: Hidden unless: #39 Question "Which best describes your school's current mobile phone policy?" is one of the following answers ("No school-wide policy, it depends on the teacher/class")

40) If your school's rules around phones vary by teacher/class, which of the following rules do any of your teachers have?

	Yes	No
Mobile phones are allowed, but must be put away or kept in "mobile phone hotels" during class		
Mobile phones are allowed, but should always be silent/off and not disturb class		
No mobile phone rules		

41) Does your school restrict access to any of the following on the school network and/or school-issued devices?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok)			
Video sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo)			
Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)			
Video games			

42) How important is it to you that schools involve students in decision-making around cell phone policies/rules?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Very
- Completely

School Policy Details & Enforcement

43) Which students does your school's cell phone policy apply to? (Select all that apply)

Elementary school (grades K-5)

Middle schoolers (grades 6-8)

High schoolers (grades 9-12)

Other (please specify)

I'm not sure

44) When was the current cell phone policy first introduced?

This school year

Last school year

2 years ago

3+ years ago

I'm not sure

45) Are there exceptions to your school's cell phone policy for any of the following?

	Yes	No	Not Sure
For medical reasons			
For emergencies			
For academic accommodations (e.g., Individualized Education Program/IEP)			

45) What are the punishments for violating your school's cell phone policy?

(Select all possible punishments that students could potentially face)

Verbal warning

Confiscation of phone for an extended period (e.g., class period)

Confiscation of phone for the day.

Parental notification

Detention or similar disciplinary action

Other (please specify):*

46) Who is responsible for enforcing the cell phone policy? (Select all that apply)

Teachers

Administrators (e.g., principal, vice principal)

Other staff (e.g., monitors, security)

47) To what extent do students follow the cell phone policy at your school?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Very much

Completely

Student Perception & Impact

48) What do you think is the main goal of your school's cell phone policy?

Reducing distractions in class

Ensuring safety and communication

Preventing academic dishonesty

Other (please specify):*

49) How clearly does your school communicate the goals of its cell phone policy?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Very

Completely

50) How reasonable do you think your school's cell phone policy is for students your age?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Very

Completely

51) How fair are the punishments for breaking the school's cell phone policies?

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Completely
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52) To what extent do your teachers follow these cell phone policies?

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Completely
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53) To what extent does your school currently involve students in decisions about cell phone policies?

Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Completely
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54) How has your school's cell phone policy impacted each of the following for you personally?

	Worsens a lot	Worsens a little	Neither worsens nor improves	Improves a little	Improves a lot	Not sure
My ability to focus/pay attention during class						
My social interactions with classmates/friends						
My ability to stay organized & coordinate logistics (e.g.,calendar /planner, transportation, after school activities)						
My sense of safety						
My sense of independence (e.g., my ability to make decisions for myself, adults' trust in me)						
My ability to regulate my emotions/mood						
My ability to use my phone in a responsible and balanced way						

55) How has your school's cell phone policy impacted each of the following for the whole student body?

	Worsens a lot	Worsens a little	Neither worsens nor improves	Improves a little	Improves a lot	Not sure
Sense of community						
Relationships between students and teachers/staff						
Learning environment (e.g., disruptions or noise level in the classroom)						
Bullying/fighting						
Academic integrity (e.g., cheating)						

56) How has your school's cell phone policy impacted how much you use your phone/other devices outside of school hours? Complete the sentence: "I use my phone/other devices..."

A lot less

A little less

Neither less nor more

A little more

A lot more

57) Have you noticed any additional impact of your school's device policies, either positive or negative, on yourself and/or other students? Please be as specific as possible in your response without sharing any personal information.

58) If it were up to you, what changes would you make to your school's current device policies? Please explain your reasoning.

Page Entry Logic: This page will show when: #39 Question "Which best describes your school's current mobile phone policy?" is one of the following answers ("No school-wide policy, it depends on the teacher/class"; "No policies or rules around mobile phones"; "Other (please specify)"; "I don't know")

Phone Policy Scenario

Imagine your school sends this message to all students about a new phone policy for the next school year:

[Action: Percent Branch: Random Assignment]

Cell phones are securely stored upon entering the building, and returned at the end of the day.

Cell phones are physically inaccessible to students throughout the entire school day.

Cell phones are expected to be powered off and stored out of sight during the entire school day, including class time, passing periods, and lunch.

Students may store phones in their backpack, student locker, or other location out of sight.

Students maintain physical access to their phones.

Cell phones are expected to be powered off and stored out of sight during instructional periods, but may be used during designated times and in specific areas such as lunch or passing periods.

Instructions: The following questions will ask about the cell phone policy that was just presented. Your responses should be based on how you think this policy would impact your school experience. Once you are ready, please answer the questions based on the policy above. If you need to review the policy again, you can go back to the previous page(s) before continuing.

Page Entry Logic: This page will show when: #39 Question "Which best describes your school's current mobile phone policy?" is one of the following answers ("No school-wide policy, it depends on the teacher/class"; "No policies or rules around mobile phones"; "Other (please specify)"; "I don't know")

Phone Policy Scenario Questions

59) To what extent would you support this cell phone policy?

- Strongly oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Neither oppose nor support
- Somewhat support
- Strongly support

60) How reasonable do you think this cell phone policy is for students your age?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Very
- Completely

61) How reasonable do you think this cell phone policy is for each of the following age groups?

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Completely
Elementary school (K-5)					
Middle school (6-8)					
High school (9-12)					

62) If this cell phone policy was in place at your school, how do you think it would impact the following for you personally?

	Worsens a lot	Worsens a little	Neither worsens nor improves	Improves a little	Improves a lot	Not sure
My ability to focus/pay attention during class						
My social interactions with classmates/friends						
My ability to stay organized & coordinate logistics (e.g.,calendar/planner, transportation, after school activities)						
My sense of safety						
My sense of independence (e.g., my ability to make decisions for myself, adults' trust in me)						
My ability to regulate my emotions/mood						
My ability to use my phone in a responsible and balanced way						

63) How do you think this cell phone policy would impact students at your school overall?

	Worsens a lot	Worsens a little	Neither worsens nor improves	Improves a little	Improves a lot	Not sure
Sense of community						
Relationships between students and teachers/staff						
Learning environment (e.g., disruptions or noise level in the classroom)						
Bullying/fighting						
Academic integrity (e.g., cheating)						

64) How do you think students at your school would react to this cell phone policy?

65) If your school were to implement this cell phone policy, what positive or negative effects do you think it would have on yourself, other students, or interactions and relationships with faculty? Please be as specific as possible in your response without sharing any personal information.

66) If it were up to you, what kind of phone policy would you create for your school?