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Cellphones, Kids, Parents and Safety

Today's New York Times has an article titled [School Cellphone Ban Violates Rights of Parents, Lawsuit Says](#) that discusses a lawsuit brought by parents against the City of New York. The suit argues that New York's ban on cellphones in schools violates the parent's right to keep their children safe. This issue may have broad implications for libraries that ban cellphones outright.

The parents argue, in papers filed in State Supreme Court in Manhattan, that the ban is so broad and blunt that it violates their constitutional right as parents to keep their children safe and to raise them in the way they see fit.

The ban violates their due process right to personal liberty under both the state and federal constitutions, they said, because it interferes with the relationship between parents and their children, without a compelling education reason for doing so.

As a parent of two young children, I've often wondered about this issue. My daughter is about to enter second grade and I recently bought her a [Migo](#) phone through Verizon. Not only can she call four numbers plus 911, but her phone allows us to know where she is at any time via Verizon's [Chaperone](#) service. However, her school bans cellphones, which means I will be unable to verify her location during those hours. While I understand this policy, I am a bit uneasy knowing that there is a technology I am unable to use that would allow me to track her whereabouts should something happen.



Posted by Michael on July 14, 2006 07:36 AM | [Permalink](#)

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I doubt there are any libraries that "ban cellphones outright," as in "check your cellphone at the door."

Libraries tend to ban cellphone *use* which is something else entirely. And I expect that even the most uptight librarian would be sympathetic to cell phone use in a true emergency.

Posted by: [Steve Lawson](#) | [July 14, 2006 06:25 PM](#)

As both a librarian and a Mom I understand that folks need to have their phones on them at all times, and am thankful that my library only asks folks to silence their phones, since I carry mine in my pocket all day every day. I have a son ready to go into 3rd grade, and we are purchasing a phone like the MIGO for him this year. His school also has a "no technological items" ban in place. However we will be breaking this ban by having him take his phone, on and silenced, in his backpack. I believe that there is a time and place for most rules, and I will not allow the safety of my only child to be threatened by a rule intended to discourage text messaging in the older kids and gameboys in the younger ones. Civil disobedience, anyone?

Posted by: [Joy Wandrey](#) | [July 15, 2006 05:38 PM](#)

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