

## **International Best Practice Model Policy**

### **Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy (K-12), September 2025**

#### **Policy Purpose**

Personal electronic devices like cell phones and smartwatches, when accessible during the school day, undermine student attention, disrupt healthy social connection among peers, and hinder relationships between students and faculty/staff.

This policy is intended to protect the integrity of the learning environment and the developmental needs of children and adolescents to be fully present with one another and with the adults who guide them.

Model Policy

#### **K-12 Cell Phone & Personal Electronic Devices**

#### **Policy:**

It is the policy of the XYZ School District to provide a phone- and personal electronic device-free educational environment for students. Cell phones and other personal electronic devices (including smartwatches, Bluetooth headphones and earbuds, and tablets) may not be accessible to students during the school day defined as from arrival to dismissal, unless such use complies with the exceptions outlined below.

#### **Exceptions**

Students will be permitted to use a cell phone or other personal electronic device if such use is required as part of a student's individualized education program, or 504 (medical) plan, which shall be documented according to applicable State and federal law; provided there is no other option that could meet the need.

#### **Definitions**

**School Day:** From arrival to dismissal

**Cell Phone:** Any wireless/cellular telecommunication device capable of receiving or transmitting calls, messages, or internet data.

**Personal Electronic Devices:** Include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets, student-owned computers, video game systems, Bluetooth headphones/earbuds, smart

glasses, speakers, and other AV/tech equipment; and other personal electronic devices that have the potential to be disruptive to the educational process.

**Storage:** Placement of a device in a secure location (e.g., school-managed locker, designated pouch, or main office location) where the device is not accessible to the student from arrival until dismissal. Storage in backpacks, pockets, or personal lockers does not meet this requirement.

## **Implementation**

The Superintendent (or designee) shall develop implementation plans for each school that provide for safe, secure storage of all student cell phones and other personal electronic devices. Such storage shall provide optimal support to students in both educational and compliance goals by rendering their personal electronic devices inaccessible during the school day. Devices may not be stored in backpacks, personal lockers, pockets, or other locations accessible to the student during the school day.

Each implementation plan shall include instructions for students and school employees detailing arrival and dismissal procedures.

**Leaving Devices at Home/Vehicle:** Students who choose to leave their devices at home or in their vehicle must provide a signed acknowledgment from a parent/guardian confirming this arrangement.

## **Violations**

When a student struggles to follow this policy, the goal will be to create opportunities to strengthen connections with trusted adults and encourage positive boundaries with technology.

### **First Violation**

- The device will be held by an administrator for the remainder of the school day. The parents/guardians will be notified.
- The student will meet briefly with a trusted adult (advisor, counselor, or administrator) to reflect on the importance of being present and connected during school.
- The adult may provide age-appropriate education about how devices and apps (online products) are designed to capture attention.

### **Second and Ongoing Violations**

- The device will be held by an administrator for the remainder of the school day. Parents/guardians will be asked to retrieve it.
- A school social worker, counselor, or administrator will meet with the student and parent/guardian to develop an individualized support plan to help their student comply with the policy and explore options for managing phone or digital/online media reliance.
- In all cases, the emphasis will be on education and support, not escalating punishment. Students will not be suspended for violations.

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

The Superintendent or designee shall:

- Annually publish this policy in the school's student/parent handbook
- Encourage staff to model healthy boundaries with their own devices during the instructional day
- Annually report on referrals related to this policy, including interventions and supports provided to students and disciplinary action as well as indicators such as school attendance, academic performance and bullying and harassment incidents

Date warned:

Date adopted:

Cross References:

[Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One's Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity](#)

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