GARDEN CITY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Frequently Asked Questions:
Garden City Public Schools Cell Phone Ban

Why did the district's cell phone policy change?
In spring 2026, Kansas legislators passed a law, and every Kansas school district is now required to ban student access to and use of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices from "bell to bell."

What does the cell phone ban include?
Garden City Public Schools students will not be allowed to have or use any personal electronic communication device on any public school campus between the start and end of the school day. In accordance with Kansas law, this includes during lunch and during passing periods. In our district, the school day is:

- 6:50 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for Garden City High School students
- 8:20 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. for Garden City Achieve students
- 7:50 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. for middle school students
- 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for intermediate center students
- 8:30 a.m. to 3:50 p.m. for elementary students

Is the district cell phone ban the same in every school?
Yes, the ban is consistent across the school district.

What is considered a "personal electronic communication device" under the 2026 Kansas law?
This term is defined in the law to include any wireless electronic communication device that provides for voice, text or video communication between two or more parties. This includes a mobile or cellular phone, tablet, computer, watch, wireless headphones or earbuds, text messaging device or personal digital assistant, among others. The law does not restrict devices that students receive from the school district, such as iPads used in our schools. These are allowed and should be brought to school for learning activities, as in the past.

What if I need to contact my child during the school day?
Please call or email your child's school office; the team will be happy to assist you. In urgent situations, messages may be delivered to students during the school day, or the student may be asked to come to the office to use a phone. Otherwise, students will be notified that they have a note to pick up in the office between class periods or after school.

Can students have their phones with them at school if they do not use them?
The law specifies that the phones must be stored securely and away from the student. Students may choose to leave their device(s) at home or locked in their car at school. If they bring them inside, they will be properly stored according to the law.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?
Students should inform their teacher if they need help contacting a parent, sibling or caregiver. They are also welcome to stop by the office during a passing period or lunch time to place a phone call or request help getting a message to a parent, sibling, or caregiver.

What if my student needs their phone in an emergency?
The law that was passed in Topeka does not provide an exception for emergencies. Rest assured, in an urgent situation or safety concern on campus, information will be sent through ClassDojo to all parents, guardians, caregivers and other emergency contacts provided during registration/enrollment. If you have questions about how you will receive these updates or need to update your contact information, please call or email your child's school office for assistance.

Why did the Garden City Public Schools Board of Education adopt new and updated policies?
According to the 2026 law, every Kansas school board is required to adopt and update board policies to explain how the new law will be implemented locally. Our student handbooks also have new policies to explain these changes for students and families. The policy is at https://aptg.co/T-1SPc

What if my student has a medical issue that requires them to use a device?
The law grants an exception for students who need their device to manage a health issue, such as checking blood sugar. Parents are asked to contact their school nurse if their child has a medical need. Our schools will also be reaching out to those they know may require a device for medical reasons during the day.

What if a student has another special need that requires the use of a device?
Our district policy grants an exception for students who need a device as an accommodation during the school day, if their IEP, Medical Plan or 504 Plan requires it as assistive technology for medically or educationally necessary purposes.

Can students use their phones when they are traveling for internships, field trips, off-site academic experiences and/or extracurricular activities?
The law explicitly prohibits students from accessing or using personal devices during the school day while on campus. Our procedure for off-campus learning experiences is in the policy at https://aptg.co/T-1SPc. Please contact your child's school if you have questions or concerns about the access to or use of a personal electronic communication device in a specific off-campus situation.

What if a student leaves for an appointment or other excused absence?
We have procedures in place to release a student's phone from storage when they are checked out by a parent or guardian to leave campus or are leaving the school for other excused absences. The device must be properly stored again if/when they return to school that day.

What if a student doesn't follow the rules?
We know this is a big change, and we will work with students at school to create a smooth transition as much as possible. We will also explain the consequences of not following the new rules and policy. Violations will be handled individually, following our standard disciplinary policy and procedures.

What can families do to help?
Please encourage students to follow this new requirement and share some of the benefits that come from a less distracted learning environment. Working together, we hope to minimize additional disruptions to their school day that could come from non-compliance or disciplinary procedures. Parents, caregivers and students are all encouraged to review the handbook policy about device use at school. This can be found in the 2026-2027 student handbook. The policy is at https://aptg.co/T-1SPc

What are the possible benefits of a cell phone ban?
Our community is unique, but nationwide studies suggest that removing cell phones during school may benefit student learning by increasing classroom engagement and participation, while reducing cyberbullying and office discipline referrals.

Where should I direct my questions about device use and the new rules?
Your child's school office will be happy to answer your questions or help address any individual concerns you might have.