



Executive Summary for Families, Students and Staff

Policy 4318: Student Use of Cell Phones and Personal Devices

Effective August 13, 2025 – Cumberland County Schools (CCS)

Why This Policy?

Cumberland County Schools (CCS) is committed to promoting responsible digital use while supporting a safe, orderly, and engaging learning environment. This policy was adopted in response to both local needs and a new state law (G.S. 115C-76.100), which requires all North Carolina school districts to prohibit students from using personal devices during instruction.

What's Not Allowed?

Unless clearly authorized, students are **not allowed to display, use, turn on, or make visible** any personal devices (like phones, earbuds, smartwatches, etc.) during instructional time.

- Devices must be **turned off and put away** (out of sight and not easily accessible—e.g., in a backpack or locker).
- For **elementary students**, no device use is allowed from bell to bell, during the entire school day (subject to the limited exceptions described below).
- For **middle and high school students**, device use is allowed only **during lunch periods and class transitions** (subject to the limited exceptions described below).

What's Allowed?

School Level	Permitted Use
Elementary	Devices may be brought to school but must remain off and put away during the entire school day. Use is allowed only when: • Authorized by an IEP, 504 plan, or health plan • Approved in advance for assistive, safety, or translation needs • In an actual emergency and authorized by staff (e.g., family death, serious illness—not schedule changes)
Middle & High	Same exceptions apply. Additionally, students may use devices: • With prior teacher approval for instructional purposes • During non-instructional times like lunch or between classes
Buses	Use is generally allowed before and after school. However, bus or school staff may restrict use if it creates safety concerns. Audio must be played with earbuds or headphones at a reasonable volume. Students must still be able to hear directions from staff.

If a Student Breaks the Rules

- **First offense:** Verbal warning to turn off and put away the device.
- **If ignored or repeated:** Will result in consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and/or temporary confiscation of the device.
- **Repeated or disruptive behavior:** School administrators may determine that a device will be held until the end of the day and/or require a parent to retrieve it. Parents will be notified if patterns emerge.
- **Other violations:** Other misbehavior associated with or related to violations of the cell phone policy may result in additional consequences under the Student Code of Conduct, depending on the nature of the specific conduct.



Privacy and Device Searches

School staff may search a student's personal device if there is **reasonable suspicion** of a violation of law, Board policy, or school rules, following CCS's student search policy (4342).

Responsibility and Security

Students are responsible for the safety and security of their personal devices. **CCS is not liable** for lost, damaged, or stolen items, even if temporarily confiscated.

Family Communication Tips

- Please **do not call or text your child** during school hours.
- Contact the school office to relay any urgent messages.
- Partner with your child to understand and follow the new policy, and to promote healthy device habits.

For questions or to read the full policy, contact your school or visit www.ccs.k12.nc.us.