



F-53

Student Personal Communication/Electronic Devices Storage, Confiscation, & Accountability

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Division Responsible: Curriculum & Instruction, Safety & Security

RELATED POLICIES: FNCE (LOCAL), FNF (LOCAL), Student Code of Conduct

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Texas House Bill 1481, 89th legislative session

I. PURPOSE

This administrative regulation establishes uniform procedures for the storage, confiscation, accountability, and return of student personal communication devices in support of district policy and state law.

The district prohibits student use of personal communication devices during the school day while on school property, except as specifically authorized by law, an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, physician directive, or other campus administrator approved accommodation.

The purpose of this regulation is to:

- Promote a distraction-free learning environment;
- Support compliance with House Bill 1481 and Board Policy FNCE (LOCAL);
- Provide a standardized process for campuses when devices are confiscated;
- Protect student property through documented chain-of-custody procedures; and
- Reduce district liability associated with the storage and handling of personal devices.

II. DEFINITIONS

Personal Communication Device includes, but is not limited to:

- Cellular telephones;
- Smartphones;
- Smartwatches;
- Smart glasses;
- Tablets;
- Earbuds, headphones or wireless communication devices;
- Any personal electronic device capable of communication, internet access, recording, imaging, messaging, or social media access.
- As defined in Texas Education Code 37.082(d)

This term does not include an electronic device provided to a student by a school district.

School Day means the time of day beginning with the first bell of the day and ending with the last bell of the day. See district website for bell times.

Use is defined as a device in possession of a student that is turned on and capable of receiving or sending a communication signal with or without sound notifications.

Possession is defined as being on the person of the student, directly held, in pockets, in a backpack, in a pouch, or otherwise accessible and under the control of the student directly.

III. DAILY DEVICE STORAGE REQUIREMENTS

To comply with House Bill 1481, Board Policy FNCE (LOCAL), and District expectations, students shall ensure that all personal communication devices are powered off and secured throughout the school day.

A. Beginning of the School Day Procedures

Upon arrival on school property and prior to the start of the instructional day, students shall:

1. Power off all personal communication devices, including cellular telephones, smartwatches, tablets; earbuds, and similar electronic devices;
2. Secure the device(s) in a backpack, purse, locker (if assigned), or other District-approved storage location; and
3. Ensure the device remains unused, unseen, and inaccessible for the duration of the school day.

Students shall not carry, hold, display, wear, listen to, or otherwise access a personal communication device during the school day unless specifically authorized under an approved exception.

A student found physically accessing a personal communication device, whether openly or by attempting to retrieve or manipulate the device from a backpack, purse, locker, pocket, clothing, or other storage location, shall be considered in violation of District policy.

B. During the School Day

Students shall not:

- Use a personal communication device;
- Display a personal communication device;
- Hold a personal communication device in their hand or on their person;
- Wear earbuds, headphones, smartwatches, or similar electronic devices;
- Access a device for the purpose of checking notifications, messages, social media, time, photographs, videos, or other electronic content.

Any access to a personal communication device during the school day, regardless of duration or purpose, shall constitute use under this regulation unless specifically authorized by an approved accommodation or exception.

C. End of the School Day Procedures

At the conclusion of the school day and upon dismissal from school, students may resume possession and use of their personal communication devices, subject to any additional campus, transportation, extracurricular activity, or safety restrictions.

Students participating in after-school activities, tutorials, detention, athletic programs, transportation services, or other school-sponsored events shall continue to comply with any device restrictions established for those activities.

IV. AUTHORIZED EXCEPTIONS

The district may authorize use of a personal communication device when necessary to:

- Implement an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Implement a Section 504 accommodation plan;
- Comply with a documented medical directive from a qualified physician;
- Meet a health or safety requirement imposed by law; or
 - Fulfill a district-approved safety protocol or emergency management requirement.
- Campus administrators may require documentation supporting an approved exception.

V. CAMPUS AND DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

Campus Principals shall:

- Ensure staff are trained in this regulation;
- Maintain accountability records including Frontline documentation and accountability receipt for device pick-up;
- Ensure consistent implementation of disciplinary consequences as outlined by the Student Code of Conduct, Board Legal and Local Policy and state law; AND
- Establish guidelines and procedures and identify dedicated personnel to manage the system on campus.

Safety and Security shall:

- Coordinate acquisition and distribution of receipts, receipt books, storage equipment;
- Provide procedural guidance as necessary; and
- Assist with accountability measures and audits.

VI. CONFISCATION PROCEDURES

All district administrators and school-based staff members are authorized to confiscate a personal communication device used in violation of this policy. If a staff member confiscates a student device, the staff member will follow the campus process or bring the device to the designated storage location when possible before the end of the school day. The staff member remains responsible for the device until then.

When a student is found in possession of or using a personal communication device in violation of District policy:

1. The employee shall direct the student to surrender the device;
2. The employee shall ensure the device is powered off, if practical;
3. The employee shall initiate the campus accountability process for collection and storage; and
4. The employee shall document the confiscation in accordance with campus and district procedures.

VII. CHAIN OF CUSTODY REQUIREMENTS

To establish accountability and protect student property, all confiscated devices shall be documented and secured using district-issued storage equipment.

Required procedures include:

1. Completion of the campus electronic tracking log;
2. Completion of a confiscation receipt;
3. Issuance of the district receipt copy to the student;
4. Placement of the receipt inside the storage pouch;
5. Placement of the device in a district-issued locking pouch;
6. Secure storage of the locked pouch in a designated safe;
7. Students must present a district ID for pick-up of their confiscated device; and
8. Documentation of device release.

VIII. ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFIED VIOLATIONS:

1. The device is confiscated by a campus/district employee.
2. Employees complete the campus tracking and discipline documentation process.
 - a. Each campus administrator will develop a process to deliver a pouch to the employee seizing the student's personal device.
3. Receipt is completed and a copy is provided for the student.
4. Device and completed receipt are placed into a district-issued locking pouch.
5. The pouch is secured and stored in the designated front office safe.
6. For 1st offense, the student retrieves the device from the front office at the conclusion of the school day. Student retrieval must be documented.

7. For subsequent offenses, in which parent retrieval is required, the device shall only be released to the parent or legal guardian through the front office including completion of the district documentation process. Parent/guardian retrieval must be documented.

IX. HIGH SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFIED VIOLATIONS:

1. The device is confiscated by a campus/district employee.
2. Employees complete the campus tracking and discipline documentation process.
 - a. Each campus administrator will develop a process to deliver a pouch to the employee seizing the student's personal device.
3. Receipt is completed and a copy is provided for the student.
4. Device and completed receipt are placed into a district-issued locking pouch.
5. The pouch is secured and delivered to the designated storage location.
6. The pouch shall be stored in either:
 - a. The Assistant Principal secretary's secured safe. (First offenses eligible for student pick-up at the conclusion of the school day) or
 - b. The safe that is located in the front office (parent pick-up required).
7. Students authorized to retrieve a device may do so immediately following the final release bell. Student retrieval must be documented.
8. For subsequent offenses or per campus administrator authorization, the device shall only be released to the parent or legal guardian through the front office. Parent/guardian retrieval must be documented.

X. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR VIOLATIONS

Violations of this regulation shall be addressed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. School consequences are cumulative for the current school year.

Progressive disciplinary consequences include:

- **First Offense**
 - The device shall be confiscated, secured in a pouch, and transported to a safe in the designated office area;
 - The school shall issue a disciplinary referral and document a warning for failing to comply;
 - Parent/guardian notification via discipline referral processed in the Frontline system; and
 - At the conclusion of the school day, the confiscated device may be retrieved at the designated office area by student (if authorized by campus administration) or parent/guardian. Retrieval of device must be documented.
- **Second Offense**
 - The device shall be confiscated, secured in a pouch, and transported to a safe in the designated office area;
 - The school shall issue a disciplinary referral and document 2nd violation and assign disciplinary consequence for failing to comply;
 - Parent/guardian notification via discipline referral processed in the Frontline system and required phone call to parent;
 - Parent/guardian required to retrieve device; and
 - Detention or other campus-assigned consequence.
- **Third Offense**
 - The device shall be confiscated, secured in a pouch, and transported to a safe in the designated office area;
 - The school shall issue a disciplinary referral and document 3rd violation and assign appropriate disciplinary consequences for failing to comply;
 - Parent/guardian notification via discipline referral processed in the Frontline system; required phone call to parent; and required conference with student and parent;
 - Parent/guardian will be permitted to retrieve confiscated device; and
 - One (1) day of In-School Suspension (ISS)

- **Fourth Offense**

- The device shall be confiscated, secured in a pouch, and transported to a safe in the designated office area;
- The school shall issue a disciplinary referral and document 4th violation and assign appropriate disciplinary consequences for failing to comply;
- Parent/guardian notification via discipline referral processed in the Frontline system; required phone call to parent/guardian with notification of the requirement for an in-person meeting;
- The parent/guardian will be permitted to retrieve confiscated devices only after an in-person meeting with campus administration, student, and parent/guardian in attendance;
- The device shall be confiscated and stored in the main office until the conditions for retrieval after a fourth offense (or higher) are met; and
- Three to Five (3-5) days of In-School Suspension (ISS).

- **Subsequent Offense**

- May result in additional disciplinary actions as authorized in the Student Code of Conduct and restrictions assigned by campus administration.

Students who refuse to surrender a device upon request by a staff member may be subject to immediate escalation of disciplinary consequences.

XI. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS) PROCEDURES

Secondary ISS classrooms shall utilize district-issued storage hotels and Velcro storage pouches.

Upon entering ISS:

1. Students shall immediately power off their personal communication devices;
2. Students shall place devices into district-issued storage pouches;
3. Students shall complete a receipt and retain a copy;
4. The receipt copy shall accompany the storage pouch;
5. The pouch shall be placed in the designated storage hotel;
6. Devices shall remain secured for the duration of the ISS assignment or class period; and
7. Devices shall be returned to students upon authorized release by ISS staff.

XII. LIABILITY

Students bring personal communication devices to school at their own risk.

The district assumes no responsibility for devices that are lost, stolen, damaged, misplaced, or left unattended by students. Parents will not be compensated for devices that have been in the school's possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

The district will exercise reasonable care in securing confiscated devices pursuant to this regulation.

The district is not responsible for devices that are not timely retrieved by the student, parent, or guardian following notification that the device is available for pickup.

XIII. UNCLAIMED DEVICES

1. Devices confiscated and authorized by campus administration for student pickup shall be retrieved by the student on the designated release date/time and location.
2. Devices requiring parent or guardian retrieval shall be picked up within ten (10) school days of notification unless alternative arrangements have been authorized by the campus administration.
3. Campuses shall make reasonable efforts to notify the parent or guardian that the device is available for pickup. Notification may be made by telephone, email, written correspondence, or other district-approved communication methods.
4. Devices not claimed within ten (10) school days shall remain secured in the campus safe and a second notification attempt shall be made.

5. Devices not claimed within thirty (30) calendar days shall be transferred to a designated campus administrator for inventory review and documented in the campus unclaimed property log.
6. Devices not claimed by the end of the school year shall be inventoried and transferred to Safety & Security at the district office for secure storage.
7. All campus receipt books will be turned in at the end of the school year. A new book will be issued for the next school year.
8. At the beginning of the following school year, campuses shall make an additional reasonable effort to contact the parent, guardian, or former student.
9. Devices remaining unclaimed for one (1) calendar year from the date of confiscation shall be considered abandoned property and may be disposed of in accordance with District procedures, applicable law, and Board policy.
10. Prior to disposal, the district shall make a final documented attempt to contact the owner using the most recent contact information available in District records.
11. The district assumes no responsibility for battery depletion, software changes, service interruptions, data loss, or deterioration of devices that remain unclaimed.
12. Any device containing evidence of a criminal offense, violation of law, or pending investigation shall be retained in accordance with applicable legal requirements and investigative procedures and shall not be subject to the timelines outlined above.