

THE ELLSWORTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOLS**

The intent of this policy is to support a focused learning environment, minimize distractions, and promote student social and emotional well-being by regulating the use of student personal cell phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices (PED's) during the school day and while students are participating in other school-sponsored activities. This policy applies to all student-owned personal electronic devices with or without Internet or cellular network connectivity capabilities, wearable or handheld.

The following provisions apply to all students Pre-K through grade 12

- Students are not permitted to carry/wear or access personal cell phones, smart watches, or other PED's during the school day.
- Upon arrival at school, devices must be powered off and stored in lockers or designated storage areas.
- Cell phones, smart watches, and other PED's may only be used after dismissal.
- Cell phones, smart watches, and other PED's may be used during bus transportation
- Students may be granted an exemption from the cell phone policy if they have a documented medical diagnosis that requires the use of a personal electronic device for the management of their medical condition. A parent/guardian can make a request to the Ellsworth School Department for this exemption. The request will be reviewed by the administration and school nurse to determine if the exemption will be granted. An order or request from a medical provider will be considered, but does not guarantee that an exemption will be granted. Any student with an exemption may only use their personal electronic device for management of their medical condition. Any other use would be considered a violation of the policy and the student would be subject to the same disciplinary action as their peers.

MISUSE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of a cell phone, smart watch, or any other electronic device in any manner that violates Board policy or school rules is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to bullying, harassment, cheating, and other violations of the student code of conduct. Use of cell phones and other devices with cameras and/or voice recording capabilities is strictly prohibited in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other places where privacy is generally expected. In all other school locations, permission must be granted before photographing or recording another person. Student cell phones and other electronic

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devices may be subject to search if there is reasonable suspicion of a violation.

At all grade levels, violations of this policy may result in:

- A verbal warning.
- Confiscation of the cell phone, smart watch, or other device for the remainder of the day.
- For continued or repeated violations, a meeting with the student's parent/guardian may be required.
- Repeated or serious violations may require a parent/guardian meeting and/or result in additional disciplinary consequences as provided in the school unit's Student Code of Conduct.

At all grade levels, parent communications concerning their child should be directed to the school office.

In the event of a school emergency, the school/district will communicate with parents as promptly as possible in accordance with the school unit's Health and Safety and Emergency Management Plan.

The school unit will not be responsible for loss, theft, or damage to student cell phones, smart watches, or other PED's students bring to school or onto school property, including school buses.

Schools will include the appropriate use of cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices with Internet and cellular connectivity in educating students and staff about digital citizenship, online safety, and responsible technology use.

Teachers and other school staff should be conscious of the impact of their own behavior on their students and avoid the use of their own cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices when engaged in classroom instruction or supervision of students, except as permitted in this policy.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 1001(23)

Cross Reference: IJNDB–Student Technology and Internet Use
JIC–Student Code of Conduct
JIH–Questioning and Searches of Students

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Adopted: March 10, 2026

Revised: August 11, 2026