



Cellular Device Policy

Cellular devices continue to be a distraction for students and their learning. Students of all ages are bringing their cellular devices into the school building on a daily basis. A cellular device is a wireless electronic communication device such as a telephone, personal digital assistant, paging device, text-messaging device, or other device similar in function that can be used to wirelessly communicate with another person. Cellphones and smart watches are the top two cellular devices found on campuses in Barnwell County School District.

Research has shown that cellphone usage at school distracts students from learning. In fact, a recent *Cell Phone Use in Schools* survey conducted in June of 2024 found that 95% of South Carolina teachers lose daily instructional time due to cell phone use or related distractions in the classroom. While disruption of the learning environment is the number one reason a cellular device policy has been put into place, other areas of concern exist, including but not limited to cheating on assessments, violating the privacy rights of students who are minors, and bullying.

Prior to a student entering the school building, his or her cellular device must be shut off and stored out of sight. Cellular devices are not allowed in the hallways, classrooms, gym, or library. In fact, students may only use their cellular devices before and after school. At the principal's discretion, students may use their cellular devices during non-instructional times (e.g., awards day, pep rally, lunch, etc.).

Age-appropriate consequences for students who violate the cellular device policy are listed in the student code of conduct.

If a student violates the cellular device policy, the following procedures will take place.

1. The cellular device will be confiscated and only returned to a parent or guardian.
2. The student will be disciplined according to the student code of conduct.
3. If a student refuses to submit their cellular device, he or she will receive out-of-school suspension.

While on school buses, cellular devices must be shut off and stored out of sight (i.e., in pockets, bags, backpacks, etc.). All cellular devices will be confiscated, including devices discovered during searches of reasonable suspicion.

If a student needs to contact their parent or guardian, he or she may ask for permission to go to the office to make emergency phone calls only. In cases of an emergency, parents or guardians are asked to call the school. School personnel are proficient at relaying messages from parents/guardians to students during the appropriate time.