

## **Personal Communication Devices Policy**

1. **What are personal communication devices (PCDs)?** PCDs include cell phones, smartphones, computers, tablets, e-readers, smartwatches, and other web-enabled devices.
2. **Why is WCS creating a PCD policy?** Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed House Bill (HB) 250, mandating that by July 1, 2025, each school district and community school must establish a policy regulating student cell phone use during school hours. Cell phones in schools have become a national issue due to distractions, peer pressure, negative influences from social media, and inattentiveness in class. The law does not mandate whether cell phones should be allowed or banned. However, it requires that each board's policy must:
  - Emphasize minimizing student cell phone use during school hours.
  - Aim to reduce cell phone-related distractions in classroom settings.
3. **What's the biggest change?** The WCS PCD policy formalizes and strengthens the existing practices in our schools that limit cell phone use during the school day. Along with continuing to expect students to keep their cell phones put away, to lessen distractions, students will also be expected to have their cell phones powered off.
4. **When can students use their PCDs?** Students can continue to use their PCDs before and after school. PCDs must be powered off and stored out of sight during school hours unless approved by a teacher or administrator.
5. **Are there exceptions for using PCDs during school hours?** Yes, with prior approval from the building principal, or if specified in a student's IEP or 504 Plan, a student may keep their PCD on. However, general use during school hours, including field trips, is prohibited unless specifically authorized.
6. **Can students use PCDs on the bus?** At the discretion of the bus driver, teacher, or sponsor, students may use PCDs while riding to and from school on a school bus or during school-sponsored activities.
7. **Are there places where PCDs are absolutely prohibited?** Yes, PCDs cannot be used in locations with a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as classrooms, gymnasiums, locker rooms, bathrooms, or any areas where students or others may be changing clothes.
8. **What types of content are students prohibited from transmitting using PCDs?** Students are prohibited from using PCDs to transmit any material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, sexually explicit, or harassing based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs. This includes engaging in "sexting" and any form of bullying or harassment.
9. **What are the consequences of using a PCD to bully, harass, or transmit inappropriate content?** Violations will result in disciplinary actions, such as confiscation of the PCD, suspension, or expulsion. Severe cases will be reported to law enforcement and child services as required.
10. **What should students do if they receive threatening or inappropriate content on their PCD?** Students should immediately report any threatening or inappropriate content received on their PCD to a teacher, administrator, or school counselor.

11. **What happens if a student uses a PCD to violate privacy or record without consent?** If a student captures, records, or transmits audio, video, or pictures of anyone without proper consent, the PCD may be confiscated. The content may need to be deleted in the presence of a parent or guardian, and further disciplinary actions may be taken, including law enforcement involvement if illegal activity is suspected.
12. **What are the consequences of violating the PCD policy?** Depending on the severity and frequency of the violations, the consequences range from warnings to expulsion.
13. **Can PCDs be used for educational purposes?** Yes, if a teacher approves of them for specific educational purposes.
14. **How should parents contact their children during the school day?** The best way for parents to contact their children during school hours is by calling the school office.
15. **What should be done if a PCD is lost, stolen, or damaged at school?** Students are solely responsible for their PCDs, and the school district assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage to PCDs.
16. **What should staff do if they see a student violating the PCD policy?** Staff should turn the students' phone into the main office.
17. **How are confiscated PCDs handled?** Confiscated PCDs are marked with the student's name and stored securely in the building's central office until retrieved through the school administrator by the student, a parent or guardian, or turned over to law enforcement if necessary. School officials will not search PCDs unless they suspect a policy or legal violation.