



# Dakota Hills Middle School

## Smartphone, Earbud, and Personal Technology Expectations

2025-26

Everything your student is asked to do using technology will occur via their school issued iPad.

### Student Expectations:

- Students are not to have or use smartphones, headphones, earbuds (of any kind), or personal tech devices at all from 8:20 AM to 3:10 PM (*“in hand means in use”*)
- This includes classrooms, hallways, lavatories, locker rooms... everywhere, no exceptions
- Students are expected to store their own devices

### Rationale for Student Expectations on Personal Tech Devices (mainly phones, earbuds):

- To support student learning, free from distractions and interference of tech devices
- To protect the school and classrooms from the negative impacts of smartphones and personal devices
- To help students distinguish and use technology appropriately
- To keep the school free of the negative impacts of social media, messaging, etc.

### Outcomes at School:

A student who has a personal device in hand will be considered to be using it. This will result in the item (smartphone, earbuds, personal tech devices, etc.) being brought to the school office. For a confiscated item:

- The student can retrieve the item on their own one week later
- A parent can come to school to retrieve the item at any time (office closes at 4:00 PM)

Pre-school and start-of-school communication and expectations will be clear and given in multiple settings. These expectations will be in place on the first day of school.

### Needs of Parents/Guardians:

Support the expectation that your child comes to school for classroom learning and a positive schooling experience that is not dependent or related to *personal* devices. Help the school by not sending messages to your student's personal smartphone between 8:20 AM and 3:10 PM.

Instead, use your child's school e-mail address (ex: [537912@apps.district196.org](mailto:537912@apps.district196.org)), as they may access this via their school-issued iPad e-mail.

### Communication:

- Back-to-School Mailing (this document)
- Parent Handbook Information (expanded background and detail on page 6, posted online)
- Start of year grade level briefing with DHMS administration (review of school rules)
- Teacher instruction and reinforcement
- PA announcements, prompts and reminders

Dr. Trevor R. Johnson, *Principal* • James B. Roberts, *Assistant Principal* • Melissa S. Tapper, *Assistant Administrator*

## Dakota Hills Middle School iPad, Personal Device and Wi-Fi Use Expectations

All Dakota Hills students in grades 6 through 8 will be issued school district iPads. These will be used in classrooms as the **only** classroom technology tool. *Everything we need students to do via technology will occur via iPad.*

We know that student possession, access, and use of their own smartphones, ear buds, and personal tech devices are a distraction and have a negative impact on classroom and school climate. The student tendency to use smartphones for social media and gaming interferes and distracts from our primary teaching and learning purpose. Young, middle-school aged students are also susceptible to negative mental health impacts via social media use.

Dakota Hills classrooms, hallways, lavatories, cafeteria, etc. will be “no phone zones”: this applies to all personal technology devices.

**Dakota Hills does not allow students to have their own smartphones or wireless ear buds with them during the school day... this includes lunch time.**

### Parent and School Options

Parents and students can send e-mails to students via their iPads at their g-mail address.

Know your child’s FLEX (1:44 – 2:14 PM) time session, as this is a good time for e-mails.

Support the school by not sending (or needing) messages to your child in mid-day.

### Student Personal Phone Use Limitations

Students are not to possess phones from 8:20 AM to 3:10 PM... this means no phones at lunch.

Students are not allowed to use any electronics at lunch.

The school has three free-use public phones for student use in foyer / common areas.

### When Students Can Use Their Personal Phones

Before school or after school.

DHMS has limited ability to receive and relay messages to students during the day: use g-mail via the iPad.

Students, parents, guardians can use communication via iPad e-mail (ex: [582743@apps.district196.org](mailto:582743@apps.district196.org)).

**All students will be expected to leave phones and wireless ear buds in their lockers or at home. Our rationale is to support the purpose of classroom learning.**

Any students who have phones, wireless ear buds, or personal tech devices out (in hand or ear), will have these items brought to the office. The phone, ear buds, or device will be kept in the main office with two options:

- 1) The student retrieves the device on her/his own one week after the day of confiscation, without a parent
- 2) On any school day, a parent can come to DHMS before 4 PM to retrieve the device for her/his student

*Note: The student will be directed to call parents (using a school phone) to inform them of device confiscation*

*Note: On a second offense, only a parent/guardian will be able to retrieve the device from the office (not a student)*

Further, students will bear the responsibility for secure storage of smartphones in their lockers. Student devices are brought to DHMS at the risk of the student/parent. Dakota Hills assumes no responsibility for theft, loss, or damage of an electronic device brought to school and will not assume responsibility for investigating loss or theft of such items.

We ask parents to limit their need to have contact with students. For parents, we need your support on this as we know that, at times, contact with your child during the day has been a cause for distraction in the classroom. Please know that a student using a phone to check a message from a parent is a violation of this practice, and will be confiscated.

These expectations are intended to protect the educational purpose of the classroom, the security of the school’s network infrastructure, support of student mental health, and the privacy of individual persons (students, staff, families).

### **Terms and Conditions of Site Wi-Fi Access and Use (iPads):**

Users of personal Wi-Fi devices must agree to the terms and conditions set forth in this policy in order to be able to connect their devices to the district network. It is important to note that students who connect a personal device for use via their own private data plan are still under the school's digital responsibility and citizenship expectations.

Note: To promote community-oriented social interaction between students, we do not allow the use of iPads at lunch.

### **Resources for DHMS Technology Expectations:**

District policies include, but are not limited to, the iPad mini Student User Agreement, 503.7AR Acceptable Use of Information Technology-Students, 503.7.1P Permission for Independent Student Access to the Internet, and 503.8AR Bullying/Cyberbullying prohibition.

### **Student Devices are limited to iPads, school computers (labs), and school chromebooks/tablets.**

1) Students cannot use photo or video capabilities without the strict consent of a teacher or school staff.

*Note:* Classroom teachers will be clear with students as to when iPads can be used for photos or video as part of a classroom task. This is most often granted for pictures of class content, diagrams, notes, maps, etc.

The spirit of this rule is that students cannot use the peer-social setting of the school to take personal pictures. Under no circumstance should another child's photo (or video) be taken socially. The presumption of personal and family (parent) privacy and the preservation of the learning tone of the school are paramount.

With teacher consent, examples of permissible student uses of devices in a classroom may be:

- to complete an online task via GoogleDocs, Schoology, Notability, Kahoot, Quizlet, Naiku, etc. assessment
- to work on electronic flash cards for vocabulary or item/content memorization
- to access a teacher-directed web resource or use of a district approved iPad app

2) Students cannot use the school Wi-Fi for non-educational purposes.

*Note:* This is a matter of preservation of the learning mission of the school. It is also a matter of practicality as use of a Wi-Fi network "point" is reserved for use by district-issued iPads, not personal phones.

3) Students are only allowed to use wired ear buds with teacher permission and only in a classroom. Wireless ear buds are not allowed. If needed, in class a teacher will direct students to plug **wired** earbuds into their iPads for us.

DHMS has the right to examine the privately owned student device and search its contents if there is a reasonable suspicion that school and/or district policies or local, state, and/or federal laws have been violated.

Violation of school or district policies, local, state, and/or federal laws while using a personal electronic device or while on the district wireless network will result in appropriate disciplinary and/or legal action as specified in the [Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#), district policy, as well as by local, state, and/or federal law.

### **Outcomes at School:**

A student who misuses either a personal or school-issued device at school may forfeit the ability to have them or use them at school. Any difficulty accessing online student resources would become part of this outcome.

### **Dakota Hills Technology Use Philosophy:**

As students now grow up in a technology-saturated world, our goal is to harness the power of technology for school purposes, but to also teach **digital citizenship** to students. Wireless devices are very powerful tools and will be used to enhance student learning. It is very important for students to use and learn ways of accessing information, creating class content products, publishing to online locations, using interactive apps for discussion of class topics, etc.

Each day, students use wireless devices to establish and further add to their own online identity. The digital "footprint" that a child creates for her/himself is a lifelong skill. How students present themselves online through apps, websites, and social media can have a lasting impact and irrevocable negative outcomes for students and their mental health.

We will work with students to recognize and protect the classroom learning environment for the school's primary purpose of teaching standards, skills, content, and critical thinking. Recently, the impact of social media use by young adolescents (middle schoolers) has shown very strong and detrimental effects. Even though a student's social media content is personal, it can easily become known in the school setting and destroy friendships and school climate.