

**5131.81/Use of Private Technology Devices
by Students**

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: **5000**
CATEGORY: **Students**
POLICY CODE: **5131.81/ Use of Private
Technology Devices by Students**

USE OF PRIVATE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES BY STUDENTS

Policy Statement

The Board of Education (Board) is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive learning environment for its students. The Board recognizes that, depending on how they are used, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices can be either a valuable learning tool or a source of disruption in the learning environment. In order to maintain a secure and orderly learning environment, student use and possession of cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices shall be subject to the limitations set forth in this policy.

There is a growing body of evidence that suggests student access to cellular telephones and other electronic communication devices may be detrimental to student emotional wellbeing and academic growth. Therefore, the use of electronic communication devices and other such technology at school is considered a privilege, not a right.

Any unauthorized use of cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices, during the instructional school day, or at such times as not authorized by this policy and the school Principal or designee, is prohibited.

Adopted: 6/3/2025 for
implementation 7/1/2025

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

- 10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices
- Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education*, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir. 1971)
- Trachtman v. Anker*, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435 U.S. 925 (1978)
- Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S. Ct. 562 (1988)
- Bethel School District v. Fraser*, 478 U.S. 675 (1986)
- Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503, (1969)

Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

1. ***Elementary School Students:*** Elementary school students may not possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property during school hours, at school-sponsored events, or on school-sponsored transportation.
2. ***Middle School Students:*** Middle school students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation, provided such cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices are not visible, used or activated, and are kept in the “off” position throughout the instructional school day (bell to bell). Middle school students must keep their cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices stored in a non- visible secure location. Middle school principals may allow use of cell phones and personal devices for middle school students prior to the beginning of the school day, or after the official end of the school day.
3. ***High School Students:*** High School students are to keep any cellular telephones, and other wireless communication devices:
 - a. In the “off” position; and
 - b. out of sight; during classroom instruction; unless explicitly authorized by a classroom teacher.

High school students must keep their cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices stored in a non- visible secure location, unless explicitly authorized by the classroom teacher. Cellular telephones and other personal wireless devices are permitted to be used during non-instructional time including: lunch, study halls and other class periods specifically designated as non-instructional. Personal devices such as laptop computers that meet the technical specifications for the Bring Your Own Device program at the high school are not included in this policy and are subject to the terms as outlined in the Bring Your Own Device policy.

Unauthorized Use of Devices

A student’s possession, display or use of a cellular telephone and other wireless communication devices on school property contrary to the provisions of this policy shall be viewed as the unauthorized use of the cellular phone or other wireless communication devices when such possession, display or use of such devices results in conduct which includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Interference with or disruption of the instructional or educational environment.
- b. Use which violates academic integrity, such as the reproduction of images of tests, communication of test or examination contents or answers, to provide access to unauthorized school information, or assistance to students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates school Board policy or the Student Code of Conduct.

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Unauthorized Use of Devices (continued)

- c. The communication of the marks or grades assigned to students resulting from evaluation or the actual contents, or parts thereof, of any evaluation activity being completed by an individual(s).
- d. Used to commit a crime, under federal or state law.
- e. Violation of a student's or other person's reasonable expectation of privacy, by using such devices with photographic capabilities in student locker-rooms, restrooms, any other student changing areas, or the classroom, or other common areas in the school where students assemble (i.e. cafeteria, locker room, hallways, etc.) whether such use occurs during the instructional school day or on school property. Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices may not be utilized to take "photographs" or "videos" while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation or while a student is engaged in school-sponsored activities.
- f. Use in a manner that is: profane, indecent, obscene, threatening, discriminatory, bullying, or harassing language, pictures or gestures. Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices which have the capability to take "photographs" or "moving pictures" shall not be used for such purposes while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation or while a student is engaged in school-sponsored activities.

Other Acceptable Uses

Cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices are permissible in the following circumstances:

- a. ***IEP, 504, or Health Care/Medical Plan.*** Students may use cellular phones, wireless communication devices and other electronic devices during class time when authorized pursuant to an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or a Health Care/Medical Plan with supportive documentation from the student's physician.
- b. ***Other Reasons.*** Other reasons determined appropriate by the Principal.

Unauthorized use of these devices is grounds for confiscation by school officials, including classroom teachers. Repeated unauthorized use of such devices may lead to disciplinary action according to Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131: Student Standard of Conduct. This may also include temporary or more permanent loss of the ability to possess a cellular and/or private technology device on school grounds.

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Responsibility/Liability

Any student who chooses to bring a cellular telephone or other wireless communication device to school shall do so at his or her own risk and shall be personally responsible for the security of his or her cellular phone or wireless communication device. Neither the school personnel or Board will assume any responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage or vandalism to a cellular phone or other wireless communication device brought onto school property, or for the unauthorized use of any such device.

Definitions

A "cellular telephone or wireless communication device" is a handheld or wearable electronic device that has the ability to receive and/or transmit voice, text or data messages without a cable connection, such may include, but is not limited to, cellular telephones, smart watches, and gaming devices. This definition also includes any current or emerging wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems developed for similar purposes.

- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 4118.112: Sexual Harassment
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131: Student Standard of Conduct
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.4: Sexual Harassment of Students
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.91: Hazing
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5131.911 Safe School Climate Policy
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 5150: Interscholastic Athletics
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6141.321: Student Network/Internet Use
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 6141.323: Internet Filtering