FOCUS Act
Policy 6.21 (Personal Mobile Communication Device)
Q and A

What is the FOCUS Act Policy and Plan?
Freeing our Classrooms of Unnecessary Screens for Safety (FOCUS) Act. This Alabama law, effective immediately, prohibits the use, operation, and possession of wireless communication devices (WCD) by students in elementary and secondary school buildings and on school grounds during the instructional day, unless specifically permitted for educational purposes, individualized accommodation plans, or emergencies.

What is a wireless communication device?
Defined as any device that can send or receive messages, make calls, record, photograph, access the internet, or otherwise communicate wirelessly. This includes, but is not limited to:
- Cell phones
- Smartwatches
- Tablets
- Earbuds or wireless headphones
- Any similar devices

How is the Instructional Day defined?
The Instructional Day is defined as the period of time school is open for an academic day. This is generally from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM (or from the first bell to the last bell of a school day). Instructional Day also includes class transitions, lunch, and any other non-instructional time during the school day.

Where can a student keep their wireless communication device?
If a wireless communication device is possessed, it must be turned off and stored off of the student's person (e.g., in a purse, bookbag, locker, car, or similar storage) during the instructional day.

Does the law provide for exceptions?
Yes…
- Use, operation, or possession is for **educational or learning purposes** under the supervision of local board of education personnel. District-owned and managed wireless communication devices, (e.g., Chromebooks, iPads, Desktops, Laptops, and other devices purchased by Cullman City Schools) that

are used to support instruction and are monitored for age appropriate content and the safety of the student.

- Use, operation, or possession is permitted **if specified in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Accommodation Plan, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Health Plan.**
- Use, operation, or possession is permitted during **emergencies threatening the life or safety of the student or another person.**

What are the consequences if caught with a WCD?

In Cullman City Schools, wireless communication devices will be confiscated for the remainder of the day and the student and/or parent/guardian will be required to pick up the device at the end of the instructional day (depending on which offence and the age of the child).

In addition to the confiscation of the wireless device, progressive disciplinary action may be assigned at the discretion of the principal or designee. Again, the progressive disciplinary action will depend on which offence and age of the student.