Smartphone/Mobile Device & Wearables Expectations for Students

This Smartphone/Mobile Device & Wearables Expectations document provides clear guidance to ensure the appropriate and responsible use of personal smartphones, mobile devices, and wearables by all Lynwood Unified School District students.

Overview

This Smartphone/Mobile Device & Wearables Expectations document provides clear guidance to ensure the appropriate and responsible use of personal smartphones, mobile devices, and wearables by all Lynwood Unified School District students.

Background

Cell phones can significantly harm students' academic performance and overall well-being when not managed properly. The constant access to social media, games, and messaging distracts students from their lessons and can lead to a decline in focus and productivity. These distractions often contribute to reduced engagement in class, making it harder for students to retain information and participate actively. Additionally, excessive use of cell phones has been linked to increased levels of anxiety and stress, as students may feel pressured to stay connected or compare themselves to others online. A recent Pew Research Center survey found that 72% of high school and 33% of middle school teachers report cell phone distractions as a major problem. Common Sense Media found that 97% of students use their phones during the school day for a median of 43 minutes. Combined with the U.S. Surgeon General's warning about the risks of social media, it is urgent to provide reasonable guardrails for smartphone use in schools. To foster a more focused and productive learning environment, it is crucial for schools to enforce strict cell phone policies that minimize these harmful effects.

Assembly Bill 3216

In September 2024, California enacted the Phone-Free School Act, Assembly Bill 3216, mandating that all schools develop policies to limit or prohibit student smartphone use during school hours by July 1, 2026. This legislation aims to reduce classroom distractions and address concerns about the mental health impacts of excessive smartphone use among students.The law allows for exceptions in emergencies and grants schools the flexibility to determine how to implement these restrictions.

Lynwood Unified is a 1:1 district for all grades. That means all students have access to district-issued devices for educational activities. Elementary students use educational technology as needed during the school day. Therefore, the need for personal cell phones in a non-emergency educational setting is limited.

These guidelines aim to create a focused learning environment by minimizing distractions while promoting responsible use of technology.

Grade-Level Specific Guidelines

Elementary School (Grades TK-6):

- **Classroom Use:** Students are encouraged to leave personal devices at home. If a device is necessary for communication purposes, it must remain turned off and stored in backpacks during school hours.

- **Non-Instructional Time:** Device use is not allowed during recess or lunch to encourage active play and face-to-face interactions.
- **Tests/Exams:** Devices are not permitted during any form of assessment.

Middle School (Grades 7-8):

- **Classroom Use:** Devices should be turned off and stored away during class time. Teachers may allow device use for certain educational activities at their discretion.
- **Non-Instructional Time:** Device use is discouraged during lunch and recess to promote social interaction. If devices are brought to school, they should remain stored and unused during these times.
- **Tests/Exams**: Devices are not permitted during tests or quizzes unless specified by the teacher.

High School (Grades 9-12):

- **Classroom Use:** Devices must be silenced and stored away during instructional time unless a teacher permits use for educational purposes. Unauthorized use during class will lead to confiscation.
- **Non-Instructional Time:** Students may use devices during lunch and passing periods, provided usage adheres to school policies and does not disrupt the school environment.
- **Tests/Exams:** All devices are prohibited during assessments unless explicitly allowed by the instructor for specific purposes.

Best Practices By Role

Administrators:

- **Policy Communication:** Clearly communicate device policies to students, parents, and staff at the beginning of the school year and provide reminders as needed.
- **Support Enforcement:** Back teachers in enforcing device policies and handling escalated violations consistently.

Teachers:

- **Classroom Management:** Establish and communicate clear rules regarding device use in the classroom.
- **Educational Integration:** Incorporate technology in lessons where it enhances learning and aligns with curricular goals.
- **Monitoring:** Actively supervise students to ensure compliance with device policies and address issues promptly.

Students:

- **Responsible Use:** Use devices in accordance with school policies and for educational purposes during permitted times.
- **Digital Citizenship:** Engage in respectful online behavior, avoid cyberbullying, and report any inappropriate content or behavior to a trusted adult.
- **Security Awareness:** Protect personal information and be cautious when sharing content online.

Parent/Guardian:

- **Reinforce Policy Expectations:** Parents and guardians should ensure that students understand and follow the school's cell phone policy by discussing the guidelines at home and encouraging adherence.
- **Model Positive Behavior:** Parents can lead by example, showing healthy and responsible phone use, reinforcing the importance of limiting distractions, and balancing screen time.
- **Support School Communication:** Parents can stay informed by communicating with school staff about the policy's impact and helping their children understand the importance of creating a focused learning environment.
- **Encourage Offline Activities:** Guardians can help students engage in activities that do not involve cell phones, promoting opportunities for face-to-face interaction and healthier habits.
- **Monitor Usage at Home:** By setting clear boundaries for phone use, such as no phones during study time or meals, parents support the principles behind the school’s policy in their own household.

Violation Protocols

First Offense:

- **Action:** Verbal warning and reminder of device policy.
- **Consequence:** Device may be confiscated for the remainder of the class period.

Second Offense:

- **Action:** Confiscation of the device.
- **Consequence:** Device returned to student at the end of the school day; parent or guardian notified.

Third Offense:

- **Action:** Confiscation of the device.
- **Consequence:** Parent or guardian required to retrieve the device from the school; possible loss of device privileges for a specified period.

Repeated Offenses:

- **Action:** Meeting with student, parent or guardian, and administrator.
- **Consequence:** Implementation of a behavior contract, potential loss of participation in student-related activities, or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate.

Smartphone/Mobile Device & Wearables Expectations

School Type	Elementary School (Grades TK-6)	Middle School (Grades 7-8)	High School (Grades 9-12)
Classroom Use	Devices discouraged; if necessary, must remain off and in backpacks.	Devices turned off and stored away.	Devices silenced and stored unless permitted for educational use.
Non-Instructional Time	Not allowed during recess or lunch to promote social interaction.	Not allowed during recess or lunch to promote social interaction.	Permitted during lunch and passing periods if not disruptive.
Exams/Tests	Not permitted during assessments.	Prohibited unless specified by the teacher.	Prohibited unless explicitly allowed by the teacher.

Best Practices by Role

Role	Best Practices
Administrators	• Include the district's cell phone/mobile communication device policy in beginning-of-the-year communications to students and parents/guardians. • Ensure posters highlighting the policy are prominently displayed in offices and communal areas. • Remind teachers (especially at high schools) to start instructional periods by welcoming students and prompting them to turn off cell phones, put them away, and remove earbuds.
Teachers	• Include the cell phone/mobile communication device policy in syllabi, teacher websites (if applicable), back-to-school presentations, and formal paperwork distributed to students and parents/guardians. • Display at least one prominently visible district-provided cell phone policy poster in each classroom. • Reinforce policy adherence by reminding students at the start of each class to silence and store devices.

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Role	Best Practices
Parents/Guardians	• Review the cell phone/mobile communication device policy with your student(s) to ensure understanding and compliance. • Support teachers and administrators in maintaining a distraction-free learning environment by reinforcing expectations at home.
Students	• Review the cell phone/mobile communication device policy and adhere to the guidelines by turning off and putting away devices during instructional time (high school) or at all times on campus (middle and elementary school). If unclear, consult your principal for clarification. • Focus on personal interactions with teachers and peers during the school day to maximize learning opportunities. • Enjoy online activities, social media, and virtual communication outside school hours.

Violation Protocols

Offense	Action	Consequence
1st Offense	Verbal warning and policy reminder	Verbal warning given by faculty/staff. Devices may be confiscated for the remainder of the class period.
2nd Offense	Confiscation of the device	Device returned at the end of the school day; parent or guardian notified.
3rd Offense	Confiscation of the device	Parent/guardian required to retrieve the device; potential loss of privileges for a set period.
Repeated Offense	Meeting with student, parent/guardian, and administrator	Behavior contract, potential loss of participation in student-related activities, or other disciplinary actions.