



On June 20, 2025, Governor Greg Abbott signed into law a ban on the use of personal communication devices by students during school hours in Texas. The Pearland ISD School Board adopted a policy banning the use of personal communication devices during school hours.

Personal Communication Devices are any electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Cell phones such as a smartphone or flip phone
- Laptop
- Tablet
- Smartwatch
- Smart glasses
- Paging device
- Headphones/Earbuds

Exceptions include:

- Devices provided by schools to students for instructions.
- Devices necessary to implement an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504.
- Devices for a student with a documented need based on the directive from a qualified physician.
- Devices necessary to comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as a part of the district's or school's safety protocols.

FAQ

Why is our school adopting a phone-free policy?

Texas House Bill 1481 requires school districts to create a phone-free policy. Constant access to phones has created significant distractions and disruptions across schools. Our goal is to help students be fully present during the school day.

What is included in a “cell phone and personal electronic device”?

This includes, but is not limited to: cell phones, smart watches, tablets/iPads, wireless earbuds or headphones, laptops or any device capable of messaging, calling, recording, or internet access.

When can students use their phones or personal devices?

Students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices at any point during the school day, including between classes, during lunch, and in non-instructional periods. Devices must remain turned off and put away (in lockers, backpacks, or designated storage areas). Use may only be allowed under direct staff supervision for educational or medical reasons.

What happens if a student violates the personal communication device policy?

Violations will follow a progressive discipline process, which may include: confiscation of the device, parent/guardian pick-up only, detention or in-school suspension (ISS) for repeated violations, and possible loss of device privileges on campus.

Violation of HB 1481 (Unauthorized Use of Personal Communication Device)

Offense	Consequence	Action Details
1st Offense	Phone Confiscation + Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency
2nd Offense	Phone Confiscation + Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency• Detention assigned and documented in Skyward
3rd Offense	Phone Confiscation + 1 Day ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency• ISS assigned and documented in Skyward
4th Offense	Phone Confiscation + 2 Days ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency• ISS assigned and documented in Skyward
5th Offense	Phone Confiscation + 3 Days ISS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency• ISS assigned and documented in Skyward
6th+ Offense	Phone Confiscation + DAEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian contact is notified.• Device must be retrieved during designated pickup window by Parent/guardian/emergency• DAEP Placement

***Parents may pick up the device during the school day or 30 minutes before or after school**

What happens if a student refuses to turn over a personal communication device?

When a student refuses to turn over their phone after violating the HB 1481 policy, it is treated as defiance of authority. The student will face immediate disciplinary action, starting with in-school suspension (ISS), and repeated refusals may lead to out-of-school suspension or placement in a disciplinary program. Parents or guardians are notified in every case, and the incident is documented in the student's record.

Offense	Consequence	Action Details
1st Refusal	Phone Violation Consequence + 1 Day ISS + Parent Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Treated as defiance of authority.• Parent/guardian/emergency contact is notified.• ISS assigned and documented in Skyward.
2nd Refusal	Phone Violation Consequence + 2 Days ISS + Parent Conference Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian/emergency contact is notified and conference held (in person or by phone).• Student may lose the privilege of carrying a device on campus.• ISS assigned and documented in Skyward.
3rd + Refusal	Phone Violation Consequence + Possible OSS or DAEP Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent/guardian/emergency contact is notified.• Administrative team evaluates for out-of-school suspension or placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).• Full incident record maintained in Skyward.

When can I pick up my student's phone?

Phones taken for HB 1481 violations are released only to a parent/guardian/emergency contact Monday- Friday during regular school hours or 30 minutes before or after the school day.

Is the school responsible if the phone is damaged?

No. Personal devices brought to school are at the owner's risk; as in many Texas districts, our handbook states the district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices held due to policy violations. Concerns about device condition should be raised at pickup.

Is my child's teacher personally responsible for the phone?

Teachers who confiscate a device under district policy are acting within their professional duties and are protected from personal financial liability under Texas Education Code §22.0511(d) (no requirement to pay for student property handled in the course of employment). Questions go to campus administration.

Can a student use their personal communication device on the bus, on a field trip, or at an extracurricular activity?

Yes, a student may be allowed to use their personal communication device on the bus, during a field trip, or at an extracurricular activity. Students are expected to follow all directions given by supervising staff, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary consequences.

What if my child needs their phone in case of a crisis or lockdown at school?

In a true emergency, Pearland ISD's emergency response plans are in place to protect students and keep families informed. During lockdowns, having hundreds of students using phones can spread false information, interfere with communication systems, and create safety risks. Our staff is trained to manage these situations, and we ask students to follow directions from trusted adults on campus.

How do I contact my student during the school day?

We want our students to be engaged in their learning; therefore, we ask that you refrain from contacting your student during the school day unless it is an emergency. Should you need to contact your student, please call the school's front office.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?

Students may ask to use a school phone in the front office, counselor's office, or another supervised area. Non-urgent communication should wait until after school.

What if my child has a medical condition that must be monitored by their cell phone?

Exceptions may be made for students to use a personal electronic device if a licensed physician determines that it is necessary to monitor a medical condition (i.e., diabetes, epilepsy). If a student has a documented medical need that requires personal device access, please work with your campus nurse and principal to develop an appropriate plan. Accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis to support student health.

What if my child has an IEP or 504 plan?

Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan will have personal device access decisions made by their ARD or 504 committee. The policy will not override accommodations required by federal law. Please contact your child's campus for support if this applies.

What if a student attends CTE course off campus and internship or clinical location requires use of personal device?

HB 1481 only applies during school hours while students are on school property. Courses or practicums off campus are not included in the law.