



Sweet Home ISD

Use of Personal Communication Devices During the School Day 2025-2026

New State Law (House Bill 1481)

During this year's 89th Legislative Session, Texas lawmakers passed a new law ([HB 1481](#)) prohibiting the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices during the school day. While Sweet Home ISD has had a similar policy, the new state law **goes beyond Sweet Home ISD's existing policy**.

*Phones and other devices must be **stored out of sight** for the duration of the school day, meaning the start of the first class until the end of the last class of the day. (See specific times below).* Under the new law, students may not access their phones or other devices during lunch or passing periods.

Guidelines for Use for Grades PK-8

Students are prohibited from using phones (smartphones and flip phones), tablets, smartwatches, radios, pagers, and any device capable of telecommunication or digital communication during the school day. They are considered personal electronic communications devices.

Students:

- may use only a district-issued device during the school day,
- must keep their personal communication devices turned off during the school day,
- must store their personal communication devices securely **out of sight**, such as inside a backpack, tote bag, or another personal item from the beginning of the instruction day until the end of the last period of the day. Storage may not be on their person or in an item of clothing. See official storage times below:
 - All Students: 7:50 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Students:

- who violate this statute will be subject to disciplinary actions, and
- who have a prohibited a device out during the school day will have it confiscated, and
- may make arrangements to retrieve a confiscated device at the end of the day.

Exceptions to the Guidelines

- In the case of a school or district emergency, the teacher or administrator may allow a student to use a prohibited device.
- Parents may call the office if there is a need to communicate with their child.

- In cases of field trip trips, student travel, and athletic competitions (both on and off campus) during the school day, this policy is suspended for that group for that period of time. The teacher, coach or other designated personnel has the discretion to allow personal communication devices during these times.
- Students who utilize bus transportation will follow bus driver and designated personnel discretion in allowing personal communication devices.

Statement of Expectations

Campus administrators will state expectations clearly and reinforce the importance of maintaining a communication device-free environment at the beginning of the year. Administrators will monitor for violations.

The only exceptions to this law are listed under the following exceptions and must be approved by the superintendent:

- When required for a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan.
- Physician-directed use due to a documented medical need.
- Necessary to comply with law or district safety protocols.

Note: A student who has been given special permission due to an **IEP, 504, or medical need** will receive consequences when using the device outside of above need and adherence to a possible elevated graduated list of consequences if the student uses the device pretending to be due to an IEP, 504, or medical need.

If a student uses a device without authorization during the school day, the device *shall* be confiscated. The confiscated telecommunications device must be picked up from the administrator's office each time [See Consequence Offenses below]

Confiscated devices that are not retrieved will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE]

In limited circumstances, in accordance with law, a student's cell phone may be searched by authorized personnel. [See Searches policy FNF] Any disciplinary action taken will be in accordance with law and the Student Code of Conduct.

The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen cell phones.

Consequences

Unauthorized use of cell phones (smartphones/flip phones), tablets, smartwatches, radios, pagers, and any device capable of telecommunication or digital communication is an infraction of the guidelines. Students using personal electronic communication devices during the school day will result in the confiscation of the device and adherence to the graduated list of consequences. (See Disciplinary Actions)

Failure to turn over the device upon first request will result in a discipline referral to campus administration, confiscation by administration, and adherence to a possible elevated graduated list of consequences. Authorized district employees responsible for personal communication device confiscation will include administrators, teachers (including substitutes or others covering classes), and other designated personnel.

First Offense:

- The device is confiscated, and the parent or guardian is contacted.
- Retrieve the device from the school administrator's office.
- Student assigned a non-exclusionary consequence.
- Offense noted in PBIS as an office referral.

Second Offense:

- The device is confiscated, and the parent or guardian is contacted.
- Retrieve the device from the school administrator's office.
- PreK-4 student assigned a non-exclusionary offense.
- Grades 5-8 students, assigned 1 day of ISS.
- Offense noted in PBIS as an office referral.

Third Offense:

- The device is confiscated, and the parent or guardian is contacted.
- Retrieve the device from the school administrator's office.
- PreK-4 student assigned 1 day of ISS as deemed appropriate.
- Grades 5-8 students, assigned 3 days of ISS.
- Offense noted in PBIS as an office referral.

Fourth Offense:

- The device is confiscated, and the parent or guardian is contacted.
- Retrieve the device from the school administrator's office.
- PreK-4 student assigned 1 day of ISS as deemed appropriate.
- Grades 5-8 students, 5 days of ISS.
- Offense noted in PBIS as an office referral.

Fifth Offense:

- The device is confiscated, and the parent or guardian is contacted.
- Retrieve the device from the school administrator's office.
- PreK-4 student assigned 1 day of ISS as deemed appropriate.
- Grades 5-8 students, 10 days of ISS.
- Offense noted in PBIS as an office referral.