

3350	Cellular Phones and other Wireless Communication Devices Policy
Approval Date:	November 2025
Category:	General School Administration
Governance Accountability	Leadership Audience: Students, Families

Cellular Phones and other Wireless Communication Devices Policy

Section 1. Overview

North Carolina recently joined more than 20 other states and the District of Columbia in passing a law that restricts the use of cell phones and other wireless communication devices during instructional time to minimize distractions, strengthen learning, and support healthier school communities. The law and this policy recognize that wireless devices can disrupt the learning environment and should only be permitted in clearly defined circumstances. At Pine Lake Prep, we view this not simply as removing a distraction, but as creating space for meaningful peer interaction and the development of lifelong habits. Without the constant pull of notifications and screens, students are more engaged with their teachers, present with one another, and able to build the social skills essential for their personal growth and future success.

State law defines a Wireless Communication Device as any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties. The following is a non-exhaustive list of wireless communication devices prohibited by this policy: cellular phones, laptops, gaming devices, smartwatches (ie. Apple Watches), and any personal technology device.

Section 2. Exceptions

Wireless Communication Devices are not allowed during the school day except for the following situations:

1. When expressly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.
 - a. The device should only be used for clear educational purposes and under a teacher’s direction and supervision.
 - b. Teachers shall allow device use only for the approved educational purpose and for the duration of the designated activity.
2. When expressly authorized for a teacher for use in an emergency.
3. When required by the student’s individualized education program or Section 504 plan;
4. As required to manage a student’s health care, in accordance with a documented medical condition.
 - a. Students who need wireless communication device to manage health care must request access from the school and as part of that request, must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional outlining the necessity of access to the device.
 - b. If approved by administration, students with documented medical condition shall be granted permission to use the wireless communication device only as necessary for their condition.
 - c. The school shall make accommodations as needed to ensure the student has access to their device but without compromising the educational environment.

Section 3. Procedures

Pine Lake will not collect or lock up wireless communication devices during the school day. Rather, students may keep their wireless communication devices on their person, but any device, including smart watches, must be turned off and securely stored in a backpack or bag, from the first bell to the last bell of the school day.

Any student who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the LS, MS, and US Discipline Plans. Consequences may include confiscation of the device, parent/guardian notification, after-school detention, in-school suspension, or out-of-school suspension. Repeated violations will result in more serious consequences, which may include exclusion from extracurricular activities and/or athletics.

Section 4. Access to Communication:

If a student needs to contact a parent or guardian during the school day for an emergency or illness, they must go through the front office. Students are not permitted to call or text home during class or lunch for non-emergency reasons (such as forgotten items, transportation changes, or social plans).

Section 4. State Testing Violations

If a student is found in possession of any unauthorized device during state testing, the device will be immediately confiscated and held until the Regional Accountability Office completes its investigation. This is a serious breach of testing protocol and may impact the validity of the student's exam.

Section 5. Implementation and Training

The Executive Director or their designee shall develop procedures to implement this policy, including how to confiscate wireless communication devices if necessary. The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or stolen devices. All staff members shall receive training annually on this policy and its enforcement.

Section 6. Communication

To ensure clarity and consistency, we will communicate our updated cell phone policy to families, students, and staff through multiple channels. The policy will be shared with families, included in each buildings discipline plans, posted on the school website, and reviewed during annual grade level or classroom meetings. Staff will receive training and clear guidance to support consistent implementation.

In accordance with state requirements, the policy will be submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and resubmitted any time revisions are made.