

STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The intent of this policy is to support a focused learning environment, minimize distractions, and promote student social and emotional well-being by regulating the use of student personal cell phones, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices (PED's). In addition to establishing expectations for device use, the Board is committed to ensuring that our schools actively educate students about responsible digital citizenship, including the appropriate use of these devices and the potential risks associated with them. This policy applies to all student-owned personal electronic devices with Internet or cellular network connectivity capabilities, wearable or handheld.

GUIDELINES FOR PHONE-FREE SCHOOL DAY

The following provisions apply to all students Pre-K through grade 12 effective July 1, 2026.

- Students are not permitted to wear or access personal cell phones, smart watches, or other PED's while on school grounds during the school day, including non-instructional time.
- Upon arrival at school, devices must be powered off and stored as directed by school procedures.
- Use of cell phones, smart watches, and other PEDs is permitted during bus transportation that occurs before the start of the school day or after a student's school day has ended, recognizing that schools operate on different schedules.
- Exceptions to the prohibition on use may be granted for monitoring or management of a health condition in accordance with a health care provider's order as incorporated into the student's individual health plan (IHP) (e.g., glucose monitoring); in emergency situations as authorized by staff in accordance with the school district's health and safety and emergency management plan.

Staff Modeling

Teachers and other school staff should be conscious of the impact of their own behavior on students and avoid the use of their own cell phones, smart watches, and other electronic devices when engaged with students.

PROHIBITED USES OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of a cell phone, smart watch, or any other electronic device in any manner that violates Board policy or school rules is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, harassment, cheating, and other violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

Privacy and Recording

At all times, including outside of school hours, the use of cell phones and other devices with camera and/or voice recording capabilities is strictly prohibited in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other places where privacy is generally expected. Students are required to follow all cell phone guidelines outlined in student handbooks at all times.

Searches of Devices

Student cell phones and other electronic devices may be subject to search if there is reasonable suspicion of a violation.

Administrative Procedures

RSU No. 5 schools may develop administrative procedures to implement and enforce this policy appropriately.

Consequences for Policy Violations

At all grade levels, violations of this policy may result in:

- A verbal warning
- Confiscation of the cell phone, smart watch, or other device for the remainder of the day
- Repeated or serious violations may require a parent/guardian meeting and/or result in additional disciplinary consequences as provided in the school unit's Student Code of Conduct.

PARENT-STUDENT COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At all grade levels, parent-student communication should be channeled through the school office or by email.

Emergency Communication

In the event of a school emergency, the school/district will communicate with parents as promptly as possible in accordance with the school unit's Health and Safety and Emergency Management Plan.

Responsibility for Personal Devices

The school unit will not be responsible for loss, theft, or damage to student cell phones, smart watches, or other personal electronic devices (PEDs) that students bring to school or onto school property, including school buses.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 1001(23)

Cross Reference: GBCC—Employee Use of Cell Phones
IJNDB—Student Computer and Internet Use and Internet Safety
JIC—Student Code of Conduct
JIH—Questioning and Searches of Students

Adopted: January 28, 2026