



Andrews ISD Personal Communication Device Guidelines

House Bill 1481 (revision of Texas Education Code 37.082), passed by the 89th Texas Legislature and signed into law by the Governor, requires all public school districts in Texas to adopt a policy **prohibiting the student use of personal communication devices during the instructional day**. In alignment with this law, Andrews ISD has established expectations and procedures to ensure a focused and distraction-free learning environment for all students.

HB 1481 mandates that students are not permitted to have personal communication devices during the instructional day unless stored in an approved storage device.

- Personal communication devices include but are not limited to: cell phones, smartwatches, Bluetooth headphones, tablets, gaming devices, and personal laptops.
- The campus instructional day includes passing periods and lunch. Dismissal for off campus lunch and returning from off campus lunch are considered a passing period.
- These devices may not be used in any classroom, hallway, the cafeteria, restroom, or locker room, gym, etc. during the instructional day.
- The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

For AISD K-12 students: Students shall not use a personal communication device during the instructional day. That means a student's personal communication device **is not permitted door to door, including all passing periods, and tutorial time (if applicable)**.

- if a parent decides to send a communication device with his/her child, the parent may send a communication device to school in the student's backpack under the following conditions (**backpack is considered the approved storage device**).
 - the device must be turned off and placed inside backpack prior to entering the property during the instructional day;
 - the device must remain off, inside the student's backpack, out of sight during the entire instructional day; including during lunch and passing periods.
 - If any communication device becomes noticed or visible, makes noise, or is accessed by the student in any way, it will be treated as an infraction.

- If the device causes a disruption, even unintentionally, it will be treated as an infraction.
- Students found physically accessing the device, either in the open or by attempting to access the phone within a backpack, are in violation of the policy.

Note: the phrase, ***“door to door, including passing periods, and including tutorial time if applicable,”*** means a communication device should be powered off and placed inside the student’s backpack prior to entering the door of school property and should remain in the student’s backpack during the instructional day, including inside/outside passing periods, and including tutorial time (if applicable), until the instructional day is over and the student has exited the school property.

Emergency Contact Procedures

Parents/guardians who need to contact their child during the school day must call the campus front office. Staff will ensure the message is delivered in a timely manner. Because AISD provides secondary students with school issued laptops, a parent may e-mail his/her student and vice-versa in order to contact his/her child.

School Liability when a Device is in the School’s Possession

Note: If a personal communication device is in the possession of the school, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device appropriately stored and free from damage. However, parents should note the school specifically disclaims any liability for devices that are damaged or lost while in the school’s possession. Parents will not be compensated for devices that have been in the school’s possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can my child have their phone before and after school?
Devices are not allowed inside the school building **door to door, including all passing periods, and tutorial time if applicable.** Devices are allowed during before/after-school activities.
- Can my child have his/her phone outside the building during passing periods if he/she has to walk outside to another building?
 - Communication devices must remain off and inside the student's backpack during all passing periods.
- Can my child have their phone during extracurricular activities off campus?
 - If students are at extracurricular activities, they will be allowed to use their device.
- Can my child have their phone on the bus?
 - If students are on a school bus, they will be allowed to use their device.
- What if I need to contact my child for a non-emergency?
 - You may contact the front office of the campus your child attends. Any message that needs to be relayed during the school day will be sent to your student in a timely manner. Secondary students can also e-mail their parents and vice-versa.
- What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?
 - Teacher discretion will be used to allow students to go to the front office to make any phone calls needed during the day. E-mail is also a viable option.
- What happens if my student forgets their device is in his/her pocket or outside the backpack?
 - The device may go unnoticed; however, if it becomes noticed or visible, makes noise, or is accessed by the student in any way, it will be treated as an infraction. If the device causes a disruption, even unintentionally, it will be treated as an infraction.
- What if my child has a medical reason for needing a phone during school hours?
 - Any student needing a communication device during school hours for medical reasons will need to have this documented in their 504 plan or IEP.
- What can parents do to prepare for this change?
 - Speak to your child about this new policy.
 - Encourage appropriate cell phone use.
 - Promote the importance of student focus on instruction.
- Why is there a change in this policy?
 - The 89th Texas Legislative session resulted in the passage of House Bill 1481. This House Bill states, "schools shall adopt, implement, and ensure the district or school complies with a written policy prohibiting a student from using a personal communication device while during the instructional day.
 - The policy must establish disciplinary measures to be imposed for violation of the prohibition and may provide for confiscation of the personal communication device."

TEA Guidance Related to Overall Scope of Policy

Notes: The statute requires that the District policy, at a minimum, (a) state that student use of personal communication devices is prohibited on school property during the school day, and (b) establish disciplinary measures to be imposed for violation of the prohibition.

This means that a student communication device is **not allowed door to door of a campus/district facility, including all passing periods, and tutorial time if applicable.**

In the event a student breaks this law, discipline procedures will be as follows:

For AISD K-12 students:

- 1st offense: Written Warning
- 2nd offense: 1 Day ISS
- 3rd offense: 3 Days ISS
- 4th offense: 4 days ISS
- 5th offense: 5 days ISS
- 6th offense: 5 days DAEP

On all campuses and for all offenses, the devices will be confiscated, and stored in the campus office. Parents/guardians will be notified and parents/guardians may retrieve the device after 4:30 pm on school days. Devices will only be returned to the parent or guardian.

Definitions for AISD

“personal communication device” is defined in Texas Education Code Section 37.082(d). It includes but is not limited to: cell phones and any wearable technology that is capable of digital communication or telecommunication, like glasses, smartwatches, etc.

“school property” is defined as: **(a)** inside a campus or district facility where teaching/instruction is provided, including but not limited to: classrooms, hallways, PE gyms, cafeterias, band halls, and **(b)** any outside property located between or around campus buildings during any passing period of the instructional day.

“instructional day” is defined as **door to door of a campus or instructional facility, including all passing periods, and tutorial time if applicable.**

“use” is defined as anything outside of the student’s backpack is considered ‘use. Even if the device is in the backpack, if it is turned on, easily accessible and capable of receiving or sending a communication signal in any manner it is in use. The device does not have to be in a student’s hand or on his/her person to be in ‘use’.