



COLDSPRING-OAKHURST CISD

Student Personal Communication Device Policy

Texas House Bill 1481 Compliance — 2026–2027 School Year

Effective Date: August 11, 2026 | Last Updated: July 2026 | Next Review: Spring 2027

Table of Contents

Policy Overview	3
Purpose and Goals	3
Covered Devices	3
Prohibited Use: Times and Locations	3
Prohibited Times.....	3
Prohibited Locations.....	4
School Bus Guidelines.....	4
Permitted Use	4
Required Storage Procedures.....	4
Option 1: Secure On-Campus Storage	4
Option 2: Off-Campus Storage	4
Storage Guidelines (Both Options)	5
Violation Procedures and Consequences	5
Detection and Confiscation	5
Progressive Consequence Structure.....	5
Device Retrieval	6
Exceptions to Policy.....	6
Medical/Health Exceptions.....	6
Educational Exceptions.....	6
Emergency Exceptions.....	7
Emergency Communication Procedures	7
For Parents/Guardians	7
For Students	7
Special Circumstances	8
Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities	8
Substitute Teachers	8
Transfer Students	8
Days Without Backpacks	8
Implementation Responsibilities	8

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities.....	8
Student Responsibilities	8
Faculty/Staff Responsibilities	9
Administrative Responsibilities	9
Contact Information	9
Campus Main Offices.....	9
District Support.....	9
Frequently Asked Questions.....	9
Policy Acknowledgment	10

Policy Overview

In compliance with Texas House Bill 1481, Coldspring-Oakhurst Consolidated Independent School District (COCISD) prohibits students from using personal communication devices during school hours to minimize distractions and enhance the learning environment. This policy applies to all students in grades K–12 across all COCISD campuses.

Purpose and Goals

This policy aims to:

- Align with Texas House Bill 1481 requirements
- Create a focused learning environment by eliminating device-related distractions
- Improve student engagement, academic performance, and face-to-face social interaction
- Enhance classroom safety and security
- Promote healthy digital habits and reduce dependency on personal devices

Covered Devices

This policy applies to all personal communication devices, including:

- Cell phones (smartphones and basic phones)
- Smartwatches with communication capabilities
- Personal laptop computers, tablets, and e-readers (non-district issued)
- Personal headphones and earbuds
- Radio and paging devices
- Gaming devices, with or without internet connectivity
- Any electronic device capable of communication, internet access, or recording
- Any other personal electronic device not issued by COCISD

Prohibited Use: Times and Locations

Prohibited Times

Personal communication devices may not be used at any time during the school day, defined as 7:45 AM–3:30 PM, on all school days. Students who arrive on campus before 7:45 AM — for example, by bus or through a before-school program — are subject to this prohibition from the moment they arrive. Devices are prohibited:

- During all instructional time
- During passing periods between classes
- During lunch periods
- During school assemblies and programs
- During any school-sponsored activity held during the school day

Prohibited Locations

During the school day (7:45 AM–3:30 PM, or from time of arrival if earlier), devices are prohibited in:

- All classrooms
- Hallways
- Cafeterias
- Restrooms
- Libraries and media centers
- Gymnasiums
- Administrative offices
- Any other area of campus

School Bus Guidelines

Students may use personal devices on school buses only:

- During transportation before school begins (devices must be powered off and stored before the student exits the bus)
- During transportation after school ends
- While traveling to after-school extracurricular events

Permitted Use

Personal communication devices may be used only:

- After 3:30 PM, while on school grounds
- On school buses, during the approved times described above under School Bus Guidelines

Required Storage Procedures

Students may bring personal devices to school but must store them using one of the following approved methods during the school day.

Option 1: Secure On-Campus Storage

- Devices must be completely powered off (not on silent, vibrate, or airplane mode)
- Devices must be stored inside a backpack or bag, completely out of sight
- Devices must remain inaccessible during all school hours
- Students without a backpack must use Option 2

Important: Students are responsible for the security of their own devices; COCISD assumes no liability for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Option 2: Off-Campus Storage

- Students may leave devices at home
- Students may store devices in a personal vehicle, if applicable and legally parked

- A bus rider without a backpack must leave their device at home; a bus rider with a backpack may instead use Option 1 once they arrive on campus

Storage Guidelines (Both Options)

- Devices may not be carried in pockets or any other accessible location
- Devices may not be worn (smartwatches, headphones, earbuds, etc.)
- Battery packs and chargers must also be stored according to these procedures

Violation Procedures and Consequences

Detection and Confiscation

A device will be confiscated if it is:

- Visible in any way, including partial visibility
- Audible (rings, notifications, or vibrations heard by staff)
- Being used in any capacity
- Accessible to the student during a prohibited time

Progressive Consequence Structure

First Offense

- Device confiscated immediately by a staff member and secured in the main office
- Student conference with an administrator required
- Parent/guardian must retrieve the device in person with valid photo ID

Second Offense

- Device confiscated immediately by a staff member and secured in the main office
- Student receives 2 days of In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Parent/student conference required before the device is returned
- Parent/guardian must retrieve the device in person with valid photo ID

Third and Subsequent Offenses

- Device confiscated immediately by a staff member and secured in the main office
- Student receives 3 days of In-School Suspension (ISS)
- Parent conference with a campus administrator required
- Parent/guardian must retrieve the device in person with valid photo ID

Refusal to Surrender Device

- Immediate referral to administration
- Campus security assistance, if necessary
- Automatic escalation to the next offense level
- Additional disciplinary consequences per the Student Code of Conduct

Device Retrieval

- Pickup hours: Monday–Thursday, 8:00 AM–3:30 PM
- Required documentation: valid photo ID and proof of relationship to the student
- No pickup available on Fridays, weekends, or holidays
- Devices not retrieved within 90 school days will be disposed of according to legal requirements

Exceptions to Policy

Medical/Health Exceptions

Eligibility requires:

- Written documentation from a Texas-licensed physician specifying medical necessity
- Annual renewal
- Documented device- and usage-specific limitations
- Campus nurse approval and ongoing monitoring

Approved medical uses include diabetes monitoring devices, seizure alert systems, and other prescribed medical alert devices.

Educational Exceptions

Dual Credit Two-Step Authentication

A dual credit student may access a device only:

- During active dual credit coursework requiring immediate two-step authentication
- For the authentication process only — typically 30 seconds or less
- After the exception has been pre-arranged with campus administration and the dual credit instructor
- After demonstrating a legitimate need (e.g., backup codes exhausted, computer authentication failed)

Important: All other device functions — calls, texts, social media, games, etc. — remain prohibited during this exception.

Consequences for Misuse

- First instance of misuse: the dual credit device privilege is permanently revoked, and standard policy consequences apply
- Any further violation: the device is confiscated under standard policy, with no dual credit exception available
- A student who loses this privilege must use a classroom or office phone to contact their institution for backup codes
- Students are encouraged to maintain backup authentication codes or use a district-provided device when possible

Documentation Required

- Written verification from the dual credit instructor of the authentication requirement
- Campus administration approval with specific usage parameters
- A signed agreement from the student and parent acknowledging the consequences of misuse

Other Educational Exceptions

- Special education students, per IEP requirements
- Students with a Section 504 Plan requiring a health or academic accommodation
- Any other educational use must be approved by campus administration in advance

Emergency Exceptions

Device use is automatically approved during:

- Life-threatening medical emergencies
- Natural disasters or severe weather events
- A campus lockdown or other safety situation
- A verified family emergency

Approval authority: campus principal or assistant principal; the campus nurse (medical emergencies only); or designated administrative staff during an emergency.

Emergency Communication Procedures

For Parents/Guardians

1. Call the campus main office with an urgent message (see Contact Information)
2. Office staff will immediately locate the student
3. The student will be escorted to the office to communicate with the parent/guardian
4. The student may use the office phone for the emergency response
5. Administration documents all emergency communications

For Students

6. Report to the main office immediately
7. Explain the emergency to office staff
8. Office staff will contact the parent/guardian
9. The student may use the office phone, under staff supervision
10. Emergency device use requires administrative approval

Special Circumstances

Field Trips and Extracurricular Activities

- This policy remains in effect during all school-sponsored activities
- Activity sponsors may request a temporary exception using the required form
- All exceptions require written administrative approval in advance
- Emergency communication procedures remain in effect

Substitute Teachers

- Substitutes must enforce this policy consistently with regular classroom teachers
- Substitutes should contact the main office for administrator assistance with device confiscation
- The main office will provide policy guidance and support

Transfer Students

- This policy is explained during enrollment
- Written acknowledgment is required from both the student and parent/guardian

Days Without Backpacks

- This policy will be amended as needed to ensure proper device storage on days students are not permitted to bring backpacks
- Advance notice will be provided for alternative storage arrangements

Implementation Responsibilities

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Discuss policy expectations with your student before the school year begins
- Keep current contact information on file in the student information system
- Contact the main office for all emergency communication needs
- Support the district's efforts to maintain a focused learning environment
- Retrieve a confiscated device within the required timeframe
- Review this policy with your student annually

Student Responsibilities

- Understand and comply with all policy requirements
- Store devices according to an approved method
- Use the appropriate channel for emergency communication
- Accept the consequences of a policy violation
- Respect the learning environment and the rights of other students

Faculty/Staff Responsibilities

- Enforce this policy consistently across all campus areas
- Immediately confiscate a visible or audible device
- Deliver a confiscated device to the main office by the end of the school day
- Document all incidents using district procedures
- Maintain professional conduct during confiscation
- Participate in annual policy training

Administrative Responsibilities

- Provide annual staff training on policy procedures
- Maintain secure storage for confiscated devices
- Process device retrievals according to established procedures
- Document and track all policy violations
- Communicate policy changes to the school community
- Conduct regular policy compliance reviews

Contact Information

Campus Main Offices

- James Street Elementary School: (936) 653-1187
- Coldspring Intermediate School: (936) 653-1152
- Lincoln Junior High School: (936) 653-1166
- Coldspring-Oakhurst High School: (936) 653-1140

District Support

- District Office: (936) 653-1115
- Director of Specialized Learning, Mrs. Angela Muirhead: (936) 653-1178 | amuirhead@cocisd.org
- Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP): (936) 653-1104

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What if my child has an emergency?

A: Call the campus main office immediately. Staff will locate your student and facilitate communication.

Q: What if my child doesn't have a backpack?

A: A student without a backpack must either leave their device at home or store it in a personal vehicle, if applicable. A bus rider without a backpack must leave their device at home.

Q: What happens on days when students aren't allowed to bring a backpack?

A: The policy will be amended to ensure proper device storage, with advance notice provided to families.

Q: What if my child's phone rings in class by accident?

A: The device will be confiscated, and standard consequences apply, even if the disruption was accidental.

Q: My child is in dual credit — can they keep their phone out for two-step authentication?

A: No. A dual credit student may access their device only during an active authentication attempt, with pre-approval from administration, and only after exhausting other options such as backup codes. Any misuse of this exception results in permanent loss of the privilege, and standard consequences apply. Students should maintain backup authentication codes or use a district-provided device when possible.

Q: What if I disagree with a consequence?

A: Contact your campus administrator to discuss the situation and review the violation.

Policy Acknowledgment

These guidelines have been developed in compliance with Texas House Bill 1481. All students, parents, and staff are expected to understand and follow these procedures to support a successful learning environment.

Policy Effective Date: August 11, 2026

Last Updated: July 2026

Next Review Date: Spring 2027

This policy supports COCISD's commitment to providing a distraction-free educational environment that promotes academic excellence, social development, and student safety.