

St. Thomas Aquinas High School Cell Phone Storage Policy: "Instructional Time" Secure Drop

1. Purpose and Philosophy

At St. Thomas Aquinas High School, we recognize that digital tools bring severe temptations and distractions that pull students away from what truly matters. In alignment with our commitment to fostering wisdom, virtue, and academic excellence, this policy enforces a focused environment. By removing personal electronics during instructional time, we encourage balance, mindfulness, and our core community values.

2. Device Guidelines: Designated Drop Zones

Every classroom is equipped with a secure, drop-in lockbox placed directly by the teacher's desk.

- **The Rule:** Students must deposit all personal mobile devices into the classroom lockbox immediately upon entering the room.
- **Duration:** Devices must remain in the lockbox from "Instructional Time" (the entire instructional period). Unless teacher states differently.
- **Zero Hallway or Bathroom Use:** Students are strictly prohibited from accessing or using personal devices while out on a hall pass, inside restrooms, or within locker rooms.
- **Scope:** This policy covers smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, and all wireless headphones/earpieces. Students have access only to school-provided Chromebooks for learning.

3. Student and Teacher Responsibilities

Student Expectations

- Power off or silence all devices before entering the classroom.
- Place the device securely inside the designated slot of the lockbox.
- Do not attempt to access or retrieve the device until the final exit bell rings.

Teacher Expectations

- Monitor the lockbox drop zone during classroom entry.
- Lock the storage box precisely when the tardy bell rings.
- Safely unlock the box at the conclusion of the instructional period.
- Take lockbox with you during both practice and live security drills.

4. Required Steps for a Medical Device Exception

St. Thomas Aquinas High School accommodates students who require personal mobile devices for verified medical needs, such as continuous glucose monitors (CGM) or heart rate trackers.

- **Obtain a Doctor's Note:** You must secure a formal note of medical necessity from your student's licensed healthcare provider. The note must explicitly state the medical condition and name specific smart device (and any associated applications) required during the school hours.
- **Submit to the School Nurse:** Deliver the doctor's note directly to the school nurse
- **Classroom Protocol:** Approved students will receive a "Medical Device Pass." They do not place their phone in the drop box.
- **Strict Restrictive Use:** The phone must remain face down on the student's desk or kept in their pocket on silent mode. It may only be accessed to view vital health metrics.
- **Violation of Waiver:** Any unauthorized use of a medically exempted device (e.g., texting, social media, taking photos), the privilege is subject to administrative review. The student will then need to use an alternative dedicated medical reader instead of a smartphone.

5. Consequences for Violations

Using or keeping a device without authorization violates academic integrity and school rules. Non-compliance will result in immediate disciplinary action:

- **First Offense:** The device is confiscated by staff, documented, and sent to the main office where it is securely held. The student can pick it up at the end of the school day.
- **Second Offense:** The device is confiscated and held securely in the front office. A parent or guardian is notified and must physically come to the school to retrieve the phone.
- **Third Offense & Beyond:** Persistent refusal to comply is treated as a behavioral infraction (insubordination). This results in a mandatory parent-administrator conference and progressive administrative disciplinary action. \

6. Strict Parent and Emergency Communication Protocols

To maintain the safety and integrity of the school day, direct contact with student devices is prohibited during class.

- **Urgent Inbound Messages:** If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact their high school student during the active school day, they must call the school's main office. Staff will immediately relay the message or locate the student. Students may not use their personal phones to call or text parents during school hours.

- **School-Wide Emergencies:** In a crisis or lockdown event, classroom teachers retain master keys to the lockboxes. They will distribute devices only when explicitly authorized by emergency personnel or school administration.