Policy: 3245
Section: 3000 -

Students and Telecommunication Devices

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) issued a recommendation for Washington school districts to develop an updated policy for cell phone and smart device use by students beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. The Board of Directors believes reducing student access to and use of personal electronic devices during the school day will further improve student engagement in learning, encourage and improve peer relationships, improve student mental and physical health, and reduce negative pressures created and reinforced by social media. This policy establishes a uniform, districtwide policy that limits students' use of personal electronic devices during the school day; this policy does not apply to school-issued electronic devices such as school-issued laptops and tablets.

Students in possession of telecommunications devices, including, but not limited to, cell phones, smartwatches, non-medical listening devices, tablets, gaming devices, and similar devices, while on school property or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities will observe the following conditions:

1. Telecommunication devices will be accessed and operated only after the regular school day, unless an emergency situation exists that involves imminent physical danger or a school administrator authorizes the student to use the device;

    a. Elementary students (K-5) shall not bring personal electronic devices to school.
    b. Middle and High school students must keep personal electronic devices "off and away" at all times throughout the day. The school day begins when students arrive on campus and ends at the last bell.
    c. The Superintendent is directed to develop procedures to support implementation of this policy.

2. Students will not use telecommunication devices in a manner that poses a threat to academic integrity, disrupts the learning environment, or violates the privacy rights of others;

3. Students will not take, send, share, view, or possess pictures, text messages, emails, or other material depicting sexually explicit conduct, as defined in RCW 9.68A.011, in electronic or any other form on a cell phone or other electronic device, while the student is on school grounds, at school-sponsored events or on school buses or vehicles provided by the district;

4. When a school official has reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that a student is using a telecommunications device in a manner that violates the law or school rules, the official may confiscate the device, which will only be returned to the student's parent or legal guardian;

5. By bringing a cell phone or other electronic devices to school or school-sponsored events, the student and their parent/guardian consent to the search of the device when school officials have a reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that such a search will reveal a violation of the law or school rules. The scope of the search will be limited to the violation of which the student is accused. Content or images that violate state or federal laws will be referred to law enforcement;

6. Any use of personal electronic devices to record fights or engage in harassment, intimidation, or bullying, or to access or share such content with others, is strictly prohibited. Students who engage in such conduct may be subject to disciplinary processes and consequences consistent with Policy 3241 / 3241P Student Discipline.

7. Students who bring personal electronic devices to school, do so at their own risk. The district is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage of devices brought onto school property or to school-sponsored events;

8. Students will comply with any related policies and procedures, and additional rules developed by the district concerning the appropriate use of telecommunication or other electronic devices; and,

9. Students who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action in alignment to Policy 3241 / 3241P Student Discipline, including but not limited to:

a. Verbal warning
b. Parent/Guardian contact
c. Confiscation of device until end of school day
d. Confiscation of device, to be released only to parent/guardian.

Exceptions:

1. With teacher permission, students may use personal electronic devices during class for instructional or educational use. The purpose of this exception is to provide equitable access to learning and to allow use of devices when it enhances learning opportunities and is incorporated into classroom instructional plans. This exception does not allow students to use personal electronic devices for non-instructional activities during class, including when students have completed their assigned work before the end of the class period.

2. This policy does not prohibit students from using personal electronic devices during the school day in accordance with an approved accommodation plan, as documented in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or Student Health Plan.

Communications between students and families during the school day:

1. As outlined in this policy, students are not permitted to use personal electronic devices during the school day, including to check or respond to messages from their family. Families should not expect that students will be able to respond to messages during the school day. Families should contact the school office directly if they need to communicate with their student during the school day.

2. In case of a personal or family emergency, a student may use their personal electronic device briefly with permission of a staff member.

3. In case of school emergency, such as evacuation or a lockdown, students will not have access to their personal electronic devices. This decreases confusion for students, staff, and families. The school and/or district will communicate any emergencies via district communication channels.

Staff Use of Personal Electronic Devices:

This policy does not restrict staff use of personal electronic devices during the work day. However, staff are encouraged to be mindful of their device use at school when students are present, for the purpose of modeling healthy technology habits and maintaining the integrity of the learning environment.

Cross References:

3241 - Student Discipline
3207 - Prohibition of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying of Students
4310 - District Relationships with Law Enforcement and other Government Agencies

Management Resources:

2019 - October Policy Issue
October Issue 2010 - June Issue
Policy News, February 2004

Adoption Date:

Classification: Priority
Revised: 2.04; 06.10; 12.10
Adopted: 8:26:26
Trout Lake School District