



Williston Middle School

Principal: Jo McDonnell

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Student Personal Electronic Device Expectations

Purpose

At Williston Middle School, our priority is to provide a safe, respectful, and engaging learning environment where students can focus on academic success, positive relationships, and personal growth. To support these goals, students are expected to keep personal electronic devices turned off and stored in their book bags throughout the school day unless otherwise authorized through a documented accommodation or school-approved exception.

Research continues to demonstrate that frequent access to personal devices and social media can distract from learning, reduce face-to-face social interactions, and negatively impact student well-being. The U.S. Surgeon General has advised that social media use may pose significant risks to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents.

Student Expectations

From arrival on campus until dismissal at 3:40 p.m., students must:

- Keep personal electronic devices powered off or silenced.
- Store personal electronic devices in their book bag.
- Refrain from accessing, displaying, using, or operating personal electronic devices during the school day.
- Follow all directions from school staff regarding electronic devices.

Exceptions may be granted for students with documented accommodations through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, Individual Health Plan, or other school-approved educational or medical need.

Definition of a Personal Electronic Device

For purposes of this expectation, a personal electronic device includes any privately owned electronic device capable of communication, recording, internet access, entertainment, or data transmission.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones and smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Tablets and e-readers
- Personal laptops
- Wireless headphones and earbuds
- Gaming devices
- Cameras and video-recording devices
- Devices capable of internet access, messaging, recording, or transmitting information

School-issued instructional devices are not included in this definition when used as directed by school staff

When Personal Electronic Devices May Be Used

Students may use personal electronic devices:

1. Before entering the school building at the start of the school day.
 2. After the dismissal announcement at 3:40 p.m.
 3. When specifically directed by school administration for communication regarding an unexpected transportation or after-school activity change.
 4. When required by a documented accommodation or approved health-related need.
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When Personal Electronic Devices May Not Be Used

Students may not use personal electronic devices:

- During instructional time.
- In hallways during the school day.
- During lunch or recess.
- During assemblies, school programs, or testing sessions.
- In restrooms, locker rooms, or any area where privacy is expected.
- At any other time between 7:55 a.m. and 3:40 p.m. without specific staff authorization.

Additionally, students may not use personal devices to photograph, video record, or audio record others without permission. Such actions may result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with NHCS Board policies and the Student Code of Conduct.

Family Communication During the School Day

To ensure student safety and minimize classroom disruptions:

- Parents and guardians may contact the school office between 7:55 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
 - School staff will relay urgent messages to students as appropriate.
 - Students who need to contact a parent or guardian may request permission to use an office phone or other approved school communication method.
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Partnership with Families

Families play an important role in supporting healthy technology habits and student success. We encourage parents and guardians to:

- Avoid texting or calling students during the school day except in emergencies.
- Contact the school office when immediate communication with a student is necessary.
- Use parental controls and notification settings to limit distractions.
- Monitor students' online activity and digital citizenship habits.
- Consider whether a smartphone is necessary, as students do not need personal devices to participate in the instructional program.
- Reinforce the expectation that personal devices brought to school are for before-school and after-school communication only.



MATRIX OF CONSEQUENCES

FOR MISUSE OF DEVICES

VIOLATION	1ST OFFENSE	2ND OFFENSE	3+ OFFENSES
 POSSESSION (visible)	Verbal redirection; minor incident entered; device confiscated ; Parent can pick up at the end of the day.	Verbal redirection, parent contacted; minor incident entered; phone placed in front office for parent pick up ; parent meeting held to develop a plan moving forward.	Verbal redirection, parent contacted; major incident entered; phone placed in front office for parent pick up ; parent meeting held to develop a plan moving forward. ISS assigned.
 ACTIVE USE (impacting a single person - playing a game, viewing social media, checking sports updates, etc.)	Device confiscated ; major incident entered; Parent can pick up at the end of the day.	Device confiscated ; major incident entered, parent contacted by office, device pick up by parent, Lunch and Learn assigned.	Device confiscated ; major incident entered; 1-3 Days of ISS assigned; parent must come to retrieve device and parent meeting held to develop plan moving forward.
 HINDERANCE (interfering with the learning environment - videoing someone or something, texting another person, posting on social media - impacting another person in someway) (any use in a restroom)	Device confiscated ; major incident entered; Parent can pick up at the end of the day; parent meeting held to develop plan moving forward; Consequence assigned.	Device confiscated ; major incident entered; 1-3 days of ISS assigned	Device confiscated ; major incident entered; 1-5 days of OSS assigned; parent meeting held; student not permitted to bring device on campus for the duration of the school year.

References

1. New Hanover County Schools Board Policies, including Student Behavior and Responsible Use of Technology Policies. Available through the NHCS Board of Education Policy Manual. [\[nhcs.net\]](#), [\[capefearbeacon.com\]](#)
2. New Hanover County Schools discussions and updates regarding student electronic device expectations and student privacy protections. [\[wwaytv3.com\]](#), [\[wwaytv3.com\]](#)
3. U.S. Surgeon General Advisory (2023), *Social Media and Youth Mental Health*, stating that social media may pose risks to the mental health and well-being of children and adolescents and that evidence is insufficient to conclude social media is safe for youth. [\[hhs.gov\]](#), [\[hhs.gov\]](#), [\[schoolsafety.gov\]](#)
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Social Media and Youth Mental Health Advisory*. [\[hhs.gov\]](#), [\[usgovernmentnews.com\]](#)

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