



Cell Phone, Smart Watch and Electronic Device Use Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School is committed to providing students with a focused, engaging and distraction-free school environment. **The school maintains a phone-free and communication-device-free school day.** Cell phones, smart watches and other personal communication devices are not to be used or accessed by students during the school day. The purpose of this policy is to minimize distractions, promote meaningful face-to-face interaction, support student attention and learning, and allow students to be fully present in their academic, social and spiritual experience at school.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School recognizes that some families, particularly those with older students, may determine that a cell phone or other communication device is necessary for transportation, extracurricular activities or other circumstances outside of the school day.

The possession and use of personal electronic devices at school is a privilege subject to the requirements of this policy and the Diocese of Bridgeport Technology and Internet Acceptable Use Policy and Forms attached in **Appendices D1-3** of the Parent & Student Handbook.

Pre-Kindergarten Through Grade 4

Students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 4 are not permitted to bring cell phones, smart watches or other personal communication devices to school for any reason. Children in these grade-levels should be closely monitored during their activities after school by an adult. Those directly responsible for their supervision in a school-sponsored activity will assist the student in contacting their parents, if needed.

Grades 5–8

While St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School discourages students from bringing cell phones and smart watches to school, students in Grades 5–8 may do so provided they comply with the following requirements:

Upon arrival at school, all cell phones and smart watches must be turned off. Once in homeroom, all cell phones and smart watches must be turned into the appropriate collection bin. Devices will be secured throughout the school day in the designated bin and may not be accessed by students until dismissal.

- At dismissal, students may retrieve their devices as they exit the homeroom.
- Devices may not be turned on until students exit the premises of St. Thomas.
- St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage of cell phones, smart watches or personal electronic devices brought to school.
- Under no circumstances may pictures, videos, recordings, email or text messaging be used by students on the premises of St. Thomas. The same guidelines apply while traveling on school buses to and from school related events or trips unless expressly permitted by faculty, staff or program leaders (i.e., Ski Club managers).

- Cell phones may not be carried by students on class trips even if the cell phone is their “camera”. Only teachers/chaperones may carry cell phones on class trips.
- St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School reserves the right to review any content including but not limited to electronic communications received, stored or sent while on school grounds or on school related trips off school grounds.
- Students may be required to surrender a device to school administrators when there is reasonable suspicion that the device has been used in violation of school policies or has compromised the safety, privacy or well-being of members of the school community.
- Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day must request permission from a teacher or administrator and use the telephone in the Main Office.
- Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should do so through the Main Office.

School-Issued Electronic Device Use

School-issued electronic devices are provided as educational tools to support student learning and are to be used only for instructional purposes and as directed by teachers or authorized school personnel. Students may use devices only in approved locations and at approved times. Devices may not be used during lunch, recess, physical education classes or other non-instructional periods unless expressly permitted by faculty or staff.

Students are expected to use school-issued electronic devices responsibly and respectfully. Students may not use school-issued electronic devices for gaming, unauthorized applications, inappropriate websites or content, personal use unrelated to school activities, or any activity that disrupts the learning environment. Use of school-issued electronic devices must comply with the school's academic integrity expectations. Students may not use electronic devices, artificial intelligence tools, online resources or other technology to misrepresent their work, complete assignments dishonestly or obtain answers without authorization from a teacher.

The school reserves the right to monitor, access, review and inspect school-issued electronic devices and any activity conducted on school systems or networks to ensure appropriate use, maintain security, support instruction and protect the school community.

This policy remains in effect during all school-related activities, whether they occur during or outside the regular school day. School-issued electronic devices may not be used during after-school programs, extracurricular activities, athletic practices or games, school performances, field trips, volunteer service or other school-related events unless their use is specifically authorized by a teacher, coach, program leader or administrator.

Other Personal Electronic Devices (iPads, personal tablets)

Except for devices issued by the school, students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 are not permitted to bring iPads, personal tablets, handheld gaming devices or other comparable electronic devices to school for any reason. This prohibition also applies to school-related field trips and other activities unless expressly authorized by the faculty, staff or program leaders (i.e., Ski Club managers).

Violations of the Cell Phone, Smart Watch and Electronic Device Use Policy

Any student who does not follow the Cell Phone, Smart Watch and Electronic Device Use Policy will be subject to the following consequences:

- The cell phone, smart watch or electronic device will be confiscated and will not be returned until a parent or guardian has been notified and a discussion regarding the violation has taken place.
- An after-school detention will be assigned.

More serious consequences as outlined in the Student Conduct, Discipline and Community Standards section of the Parent & Student Handbook may result from repeated or serious misuse of cell phones, smart watches or electronic devices depending on the nature and circumstances of the infraction.