

POLICY GROUP 3 – STUDENTS

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE POLICY

SEC. 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY.

Multiple studies have documented the harmful effects of cell phone and social media use on student well-being and academic progress. As a result, Texas law requires public schools to prohibit the use of personal communication devices during the school day on school property. This policy is adopted to implement this requirement and improve the quality of the learning environment at IDEA Public Schools.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS

- “IDEA property” means anywhere on an IDEA Public Schools’ campus or facility where instruction is provided, including but not limited to classrooms, hallways, gyms, cafeterias, band halls and all other extracurricular spaces; outdoor fields, tracks, and other athletic areas; all breezeways, courtyards, playgrounds, and other outdoor areas, specifically including all IDEA parking lots.
 - “IDEA property” excludes off-site education locations where the facility is subject to rules outside the control of IDEA Public Schools. This includes off-site dual credit college course attendance. While at an off-site educational location, students must follow any communication device requirements in place at that location.
- “School day” means the time of day beginning with the first bell of the day and ending with the last bell of the day. Before- or after-school activity for a school-sponsored extracurricular activity is not part of the school day.
- “Use” is defined as a device in possession of a student that is turned on and capable of receiving or sending a communication signal.
- “Possession” is defined as being on the person of the student, directly held, in pockets, in a backpack, in a pouch, or otherwise accessible and under the control of the student directly.
- “Personal communication devices” are defined as but are not limited to telephones, cellular phones (e.g., smartphones or flip phones), tablets, smartwatches, radios, pagers, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

Education Code 37.082(d).

SEC 3. STUDENT CELLULAR TELEPHONE USAGE.

While on IDEA property during the school day, students must power off all personal communication devices, including cellular telephones, and store them out of sight in a backpack, bookbag, or locker.

Beginning of the School Day

When the school day begins, each student must power off all personal communication devices and ensure their personal communication device(s) remains unused by securing the device(s) in the student’s backpack, bookbag, or locker for the entirety of the school day; students should not hold / have a device in their hands at any time during the school day; students found physically accessing the device, either in the open or by attempting to access within a backpack, bookbag, or locker, are in violation of the policy.

End of the School Day

At the conclusion of the school day, subject to any other limitations contained in this policy, each student may begin using their personal communication devices.

SEC. 4. DISCIPLINE.

Each IDEA campus will designate an appropriate secure location in the school where confiscated student personal communication devices will be kept, and a process to ensure the school can identify which student is the owner of each device that is confiscated.

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All IDEA administrators and campus staff are authorized to confiscate a personal communication device used in violation of this policy. If a staff member confiscates a device, the staff member should bring the device to the designated storage location when convenient during the day, and the staff member remains responsible for the device until then.

Disciplinary consequences for students who use a personal communication device while on school property during the school day will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including any progressive sanctions for ongoing violations.

IDEA may dispose of a confiscated personal communication device in any reasonable manner after having provided the student's parent 90 days' prior notice in writing of IDEA's intent to dispose of the device.

Education Code 37.082.

SEC. 5. SCHOOL LIABILITY WHEN A DEVICE IS IN THE SCHOOL'S POSSESSION.

If a personal communication device is in the possession of IDEA Public Schools, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device appropriately stored and free from damage. However, parents should note **IDEA Public Schools specifically disclaims any liability for devices that are damaged or lost while in the school's possession.** Parents will not be compensated for devices that have been in the school's possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

SEC. 6. EXCEPTIONS.

Each principal must maintain a list of students for whom an exception applies and any limitations/situations to which the exception applies. Principals must ensure that all appropriate staff are made aware of each student's authorized exception to use personal communication devices.

The following exceptions apply to this policy:

- A student who has a documented need to use a personal communication device in an individualized education program (IEP), Section 504 accommodation plan, individualized health plan, or other similar program or plan.
- A student has a documented need to use a personal communication device based on a directive from a qualified physician; a directive must be submitted to the campus principal. A qualified physician for purposes of this policy shall mean a physician licensed to practice in Texas. The directive must state the conditions under which the student would need to access and use their personal communication device during the school day on school property. The parent may be asked to sign consent for school staff to contact the physician should the school need more information in order to comply with the directive. Use authorized under this provision should be conducted in a manner that minimizes disruption to instruction and the school environment, and may be subject to reasonable limitation on time, place and manner as determined by principal or designee. Authorization under this provision can be revoked if the device is being used in a way that is found to disrupt the learning environment.
- If IDEA determines that a legally required health or safety requirement would authorize or require the use of a personal communication device, IDEA shall notify all appropriate staff of the circumstances by which this would be authorized or required. The school board must vote to approve any use under this exception.
- Campus principals are authorized to use discretion in permitting student use of personal communication devices in emergency circumstances. Any use permitted under this exception must be reported to the board during the next regularly scheduled school board meeting.
- Cellular telephones may be used for learning purposes at the discretion of the principal.

Any student who is provided an exception in accordance with the above remains subject to disciplinary

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measures if the student uses a personal communication device outside the scope of the documented authorized use.

Education Code 37.082(c).

SEC. 7. TRAINING AND UPDATES.

IDEA shall properly train or ensure training is provided to IDEA officers and employees on the requirements of this policy and any administrative procedures adopted to implement this policy. Additionally, IDEA shall notify IDEA officers and employees of any changes to this policy and related requirements.

SEC. 8. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES.

IDEA shall formally adopt administrative procedures as reasonably necessary to properly administer this policy and to adhere to applicable law and rule. In doing so, IDEA shall not adopt, and are prohibited from adopting, an administrative procedure that conflicts with applicable law or this policy. Accordingly, IDEA shall confer with the Board or legal counsel before deviating from the requirements set forth in this policy. In the event that a deviation from this policy becomes necessary, IDEA shall either recommend an amendment to this policy or the Board's approval of a specific deviation, including the purpose, scope and duration of the requested deviation.

SEC. 9. DATE ADOPTED AND EFFECTIVE.

As set forth in the pertinent minutes to the meeting of the Board, the Board amended this policy on August 22, 2025, and it became effective on August 22, 2025.

SEC. 10. RETENTION.

This policy shall be retained until superseded, expired, or discontinued and for five (5) years thereafter in accordance with state law.

SEC. 11. CERTIFICATION.

The Undersigned, being the Secretary of the Corporation, hereby certifies that the foregoing represents a true copy of the Board Policy relating to the Student Cellular Phone Usage policy, as originally adopted by the Board on August 22, 2025, which Policy, is in full force and effect and has not been revoked or amended.

Signed by:



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Ed Rivera, Secretary
8/22/2025

Date Certified