

Hamilton County Board of Education

Monitoring:

**Review:
Annually, in
June**

Descriptor Term:

Wireless Communication Devices

Descriptor Code:

6.311

Issued Date:

07/20/23

Rescinded:

Revised:

08/15/25

General¹

The increase in use of cell phones and personal communication devices by students during the school day has become a significant distraction in the school environment and is impeding student learning. Accordingly, subject to the limited exceptions set forth in this policy, students are not permitted to use wireless communication devices on campus during the school day

For the purposes of this policy, "wireless communication device" means any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two (2) or more parties, including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, gaming devices, or wearable technology. "Wireless communication device" does not include a school-issued device such as a Chromebook.

PROHIBITED USE DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Students are prohibited from using personal cell phones or similar portable wireless communication devices (tablets, MP3 players, earbuds, smart glasses, gaming devices, etc.) during the school day. This includes **class time, lunch periods, transitions between classes, and restrooms.**

School administration is responsible for the consistent and equitable enforcement of this policy. Failure to adhere to the expectations outlined herein may result in administrative review by the Superintendent or their designee and may be reflected in the principal's annual performance evaluation. The Superintendent shall be responsible for ensuring districtwide adherence to this policy and for implementing systems of accountability and support for building-level enforcement.

Unless one of the limited exceptions below applies, students may not use, display, or be in visible possession of any wireless communication devices from starting bell to ending bell.

During the school day, these devices must be:

- **Stored in an assigned locker, backpack, purse, or vehicle, or a designated location assigned by school administration;**
- **Turned off or on airplane mode; AND**
- **Out of sight.**

EXCEPTIONS

- **If a student has a documented medical condition requiring device access to help manage the student's health (approved by the principal or designee);**

- If use of such a device is included in a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Section 504 Plan accommodation, or individual learning plan;
- If the device is being used by a student with a disability for operation of assistive technology to increase, maintain, or improve the student's functional capabilities;
- Wireless communication device use during the school day may only occur with explicit administrative approval and should be limited to circumstances where use of the district-issued Chromebook or other school-provided devices is insufficient or impractical. The district's expectation is that students will primarily utilize Chromebooks or approved school technology for instructional purposes. Wireless communication devices are not to be used as a substitute unless specifically authorized by school administration for a defined educational activity.
- In the event of an emergency, students may use a wireless communication device with the permission of a teacher or administrator.

Before & After-School Use

Student use of portable wireless communication devices is permitted only before the first instructional bell and after the final dismissal bell.

~~A student may be permitted to utilize a wireless communication device under the following circumstances:~~

- ~~1. In case of an emergency;~~
- ~~2. When authorized by a teacher;~~
- ~~3. To manage the student's health, as documented in the student's individual healthcare plan;~~
- ~~4. When the possession or use is required by the student's individual education program, 504 plan, or individual learning plan; or~~
- ~~5. When the device is being used by a student with a disability for the operation of assistive technology to increase, maintain, or improve the student's functional capabilities.~~

~~Unless one of the listed exceptions applies, students may possess wireless communication devices only so long as they are secured within district-approved locked pouches during operational school hours, a process that will be implemented by fall break of the 2025-2026 school year. Students will be responsible for the cost of purchasing the pouch to possess their device on campus~~

PENALTIES

~~Unauthorized use or improper storage of a device may result in confiscation and/or other consequences aligned with the HCS Code of Acceptable Behavior.~~

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION

Violations of this policy will result in:

- *1st Offense: Phone is taken by the teacher and delivered to administration. The phone is held until the end of the day; a parent is notified.*
- *2nd Offense: Phone is held by administration for **three (3) school days**; a parent/guardian must retrieve the device in person.*
- *3rd Offense: Phone is held for **seven (7) school days**; a parent/guardian must retrieve the device in person.*
- *4th Offense: Phone is held for **thirty (30) school days**; the student will **lose the privilege** to bring any wireless device to campus for the remainder of the semester or school year.*
 - i. If a student refuses to turn in the phone/device, an additional referral will be submitted for Defiance/Disrespect, which will follow disciplinary steps.
 - ii. A parent or guardian will be notified, and a meeting may be required with school administration to review expectations and consequences. Students may be restricted from bringing a wireless electronic device to campus for the remainder of the semester or school year, at the discretion of the principal or designee.
 - iii. Phones that are confiscated will be safely and securely locked up during the hold period. The school is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage to the device during the hold period.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

~~In the event of an emergency or possible emergency occurring at school, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be alerted through electronic means at the contact information on record within the student information system.~~

Students will be authorized to use a wireless communication device for communication purposes in the event of an emergency or possible emergency. However, the principal or principal's designee will remain the primary point of contact for families in the event of an emergency or possible emergency. All emergency communication from the school or district will be shared through the district's mass communication system.

- 1 **Notice and Communication**
- 2 This policy will be communicated to students, staff, and families annually. Schools will post reminders
- 3 of the policy in common areas and classrooms.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-2-2001

Cross References