

## Holland ISD Student Personal Communication Devices Procedures

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 (HB 1481) 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 in our schools.

Definitions for purposes of this policy:

- “school property” means anywhere on a school’s campus or in a district 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 school parking lots. It excludes off-site dual credit college course attendance.
- “school day” means the time of day beginning with the first bell of the day and ending with the last bell of the day, including off campus school-sponsored extracurricular activities. 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.
- “personal communication device” as defined in Texas Education Code Section 37.082(d) includes devices like cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and other devices capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

HISD students must keep all personal communication devices powered off and stored out of reach in their backpacks for the entire school day. When students are off-campus at school-sponsored events during the school day, expectations for the use of personal communication devices will be communicated in advance by the event’s sponsor, teacher, or coach—after receiving approval from the campus administrator or program director. These expectations may vary based on factors such as the nature of the event, travel distance, or instances in which students are gone for more than one day.

When the school day begins, each student shall 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 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, are in violation of the policy.

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. All district administrators and school-based staff members are authorized to confiscate a personal communication device used in violation of this policy. If a staff member confiscates a student device, the staff member will bring the device to the designated storage location when convenient during the day. A student who violates this policy is subject to the following disciplinary measures, subject to and in accordance with the district's Student Code of Conduct (SCOC), including any progressive sanctions for ongoing violations:

### **First Offense**

Device will be confiscated and stored in the office for the remainder of the school day. Parent or guardian will be notified, and student can pick up confiscated device at 3:45.

### **Second Offense**

Device will be confiscated and stored in the office for the remainder of the school day. Only the parent or guardian is permitted to pick up confiscated device. Student will be assigned detention.

### **Third Offense**

Device will be confiscated and stored in the office for the remainder of the school day. Only the parent or guardian is permitted to pick up the confiscated device. Student will be assigned an in school suspension (ISS).

### **Fourth Offense (and higher)**

Device will be confiscated and stored in the office for the remainder of the school day. Only the parent or guardian is permitted to pick up confiscated device. The student and parent will meet with the campus principal or designee. Student will be assigned in school suspension (ISS).

If a personal communication device is not retrieved by a parent or guardian within two weeks of the school sending notice, the school shall send a second notice that specifies that the school will dispose of the device if not retrieved within 90 days of the second notice. The school may dispose of the device if not retrieved within 90 days of sending a second notice to the student's parent or guardian.

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.
- 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.
- 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.

Any student who is provided an exception in accordance with the above remains subject to disciplinary measures if the student uses a personal communication device outside the scope of the documented authorized use.

If a personal communication device is in the possession of the school, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device appropriately stored and free from damage. However, parents should note the school 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.

As always, if students need to communicate with their parents during the school day—or if parents need to get a message to their child—please contact the campus office. We'll be happy to assist in ensuring messages are delivered.

Thank you for helping us minimize disruptions and maintain a focused learning environment.