

# DRAFT

Dear Panther Family,

We are writing to you with important news regarding a new state law that will further strengthen our commitment to providing an optimal learning environment for all students. House Bill 1481 has been signed into law, prohibiting **students from using personal electronic devices during school hours** while on school property. Students who bring personal electronic devices to campus must have them secured in their backpacks or bags, out of sight, set to a silenced focus mode or powered off, at all times during school hours. Use is not allowed during passing periods, lunches, or during class.

Proactively, Navarro ISD's current policy and diligent enforcement already aligns with much of this new legislation. We believe that minimizing distractions is crucial for fostering a focused and engaging educational experience. Types of personal electronics prohibited include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Apple/Smart watches
- Fitness Trackers with Messaging Capabilities
- Bluetooth Ear Buds/Headphones
- Tablets
- Personal Laptops
- Gaming Devices
- Pagers
- Radio devices
- AI/Smart glasses

and any other electronic device capable of telecommunications or digital communications

## **Exceptions to House Bill 1481 include:**

- Devices necessary to implement an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a plan created under Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 794), or a similar program or plan.
- Devices used by a student with a documented medical need based on a directive from a qualified physician such as glucose monitors.
- Devices necessary to comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of the district's or school's safety protocols such as the ability to **report anonymous alerts** through the STOPit App, various **support hotlines**, and during **active emergency situations**.
- Electronic devices provided to a student by the school for instructional purposes such as Chromebooks.

The core purpose of HB 1481 is rooted in educational excellence and student well-being. Research consistently shows a link between excessive personal device use and decreased academic performance, shortened attention spans, and even negative impacts on mental health and social development. By limiting the use of these devices, we aim to:

- **Enhance Classroom Focus:** Create a learning environment where students can fully engage with lessons and participate without the constant temptation of notifications and social media.
- **Promote In-Person Connection:** Encourage students to interact directly with their peers and adults, fostering valuable social skills, collaboration, and a stronger sense of community within our schools.
- **Reduce Digital Distractions:** Help students develop better self-regulation and focus, skills that are essential for success in all aspects of life.
- **Address Mental Health and Cyberbullying Concerns:** Provide a healthier environment by reducing opportunities for screen addiction and the negative impacts of social media, including cyberbullying.

Our 2025-2026 Student Code of Conduct reflects this new state law and Board policy FNCE (Local reflects the district's policy related to the changes passed through HB1481.

### **Disciplinary consequences for violation of FNCE (Local), as reflected in the Student Handbook:**

#### **1st Offense:**

- The device is held in the front office
- Parent/guardian is notified
- Only a **parent/guardian may pick up** the device on the next school day
- Behavior is logged in the student's record

#### **2nd Offense:**

- The device is held in the front office
- Parent/guardian is notified
- Only a **parent/guardian may pick up** the device on the next school day
- Behavior is logged in the student's record
- 1 Day ISS assigned

#### **3rd Offense:**

- The device is held in the front office
- Parent/guardian is notified
- Only a **parent/guardian may pick up** the device on the next school day
- Additional documentation of the incident in behavior records
- 2 Days ISS assigned

#### **4th Offense:**

- The device is held in the front office
- Parent/guardian is notified
- Only a **parent/guardian may pick up** the device on the next school day
- Additional documentation of the incident in behavior records
- 3 Days ISS assigned

Offenses beyond 4 will be seen as a serious violation and will result in:

- The device being held in the front office
- Parent/guardian is notified
- Only a **parent/guardian may pick up** the device on the next school day
- A behavior contract will be developed with the student
- Additional documentation of the incident in behavior records
- Up to 10 Days ISS assigned

**Device Pickup Hours by Campus:**

- **Elementary:** 7:30 AM – 3:05 PM
- **Intermediate:** 7:30 AM – 3:05 PM
- **Junior High School:** 8:30 AM – 4:10 PM
- **High School:** 8:30 AM – 4:10 PM

Only a **parent or guardian** may retrieve a confiscated device. Students are **not permitted** to pick up their own device.

Parents, you are our most crucial partners in ensuring the success of this new law. We ask for your continued support of our educators and administrators by discussing these changes with your child at home by reinforcing the importance of adhering to school rules, district policy, and all laws. Your partnership with us in these proactive efforts supports success in creating a focused learning environment. This includes helping your child understand that their personal electronic devices must be secured in their backpacks or bags, out of sight, set to a silenced focus mode or powered off, at all times during school hours. By not attempting to contact your child on their personal device during the school day, you directly support our teachers and help us maintain an uninterrupted learning environment.

We understand that you may have concerns about contacting your child during the school day in case of an emergency. Please be assured that Navarro ISD remains committed to facilitating essential communication. Parents can always contact their child when necessary by calling the front office of their child's school. Our staff will ensure that important messages are delivered promptly and efficiently. Conversely, we ask that you ensure your contact information is always up-to-date in the Ascender Parent Portal. Additionally, please help your child memorize your phone number so they can reach you by using the office phone available to them at any time.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we implement this new state law. Together, we can create an environment where our students can truly grow academically, socially, and emotionally. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your campus principal.

Sincerely,

Mandy D. Epley

Superintendent of Schools