

DeSoto ISD Personal Communications Devices Policy Implementation Plan

Campus Personal Communication Devices Policy Implementation Plan

Overview of the new Texas law (House Bill 1481):

- Effective September 18, 2025
- Board must approve and adopt policies prohibiting use of cell phones, smartwatches, and non-instructional personal communication devices during school hours
- Exemptions for medical needs, special education, and instructional use

Model Policy Language

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 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.
 - “School property” excludes off-site education locations where the facility is subject to rules outside the control of the school district. 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 property” excludes students learning from home or another off-site location as part of the district’s virtual instruction program.
- “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.

- The school day does not include time riding to and from school on school buses.
- “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 device” is defined in Texas Education Code Section 37.082(d). It also includes any wearable technology that is capable of digital communication or telecommunication, like glasses.

Students shall be allowed to possess a personal communication device during the school day on school property, subject to the limitations below.

Students must keep a personal communication device powered off the entirety of the school day while on school property and must keep it out of reach in the student’s locker or in a backpack.

When the school day begins, each student shall power off all personal communication devices and ensure their personal communication device(s) remains unused by security 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.

Disciplinary Measures for Violations

Each school must designate an appropriately secured location in the school (e.g., a portion of the main office) where confiscated student personal communication devices shall be kept, and a process to ensure the school can identify which student is the owner of each device that is kept.

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 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.

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

- The device shall be confiscated and stored in the main office for the remainder of the school day; the student's parent or guardian will be notified.
- The school shall issue a written warning to both the student and the parent or guardian about further consequences for failing to comply with this policy.
- Only the student's parent or guardian is permitted to pick up confiscated devices.

Second Offense

- The device shall be confiscated and stored in the main office for the remainder of the school day; the student's parent or guardian will be notified.
- Only the parent or guardian is permitted to pick up confiscated devices.
- The student will be assigned three (3) days of in-school suspension (ISS).

Third Offense

- The device shall be confiscated and stored in the main office until the conditions for retrieval after a third offense are met; the student's parent or guardian will be notified of the requirement for an in-person meeting.
- The parent or guardian will be permitted to retrieve confiscated devices only after an in-person meeting with the principal or designee, student, and parent or guardian in attendance. At the in-person meeting, a behavior contract will be created and signed by the student and parent or guardian.
- The student will be assigned five (5) days of in-school suspension (ISS).

Fourth Offense (and higher)

- The device shall be confiscated and stored in the main office for the remainder of the school day; the student's parent or guardian will be notified.
- Only the parent or guardian is permitted to pick up confiscated devices.
- The student will be scheduled for a due process hearing for a 15-day DAEP placement.

If a personal communication device is not retrieved by a parent or guardian within 90 days of the school sending notice, the school shall dispose of the device

Exceptions to the Prohibition of Use of a Personal Communication Device

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 who 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 the superintendent determines that a legally required health or safety requirement would authorize or require the use of a personal communication device, the superintendent 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.

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.

School Liability when a Device is in the School's Possession

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.

Draft of 2025-26 Student Code of Conduct Verbiage

Possession of Personal Communication Devices

Students shall not:

- Use a personal communication device, including a cell phone, or other electronic device, on school property during the school day. [See Glossary]
- Inappropriate use of a personal communication device during the school day will result in disciplinary action in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

Guideline for Use

Students are prohibited from using personal communication devices. Personal Communication Device means a telephone, cell phone such as a smartphone or flip phone, tablet, smartwatch, radio device, paging device, or any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

Students:

- may only use a district-issued device during the school day,
- who violate this statute will be subject to disciplinary actions,
- **must have their device off and stored in their backpack from the beginning of 1st period to the end of the last period; and**
- who have prohibited a device out during the school day will have it confiscated, and it will only be returned to the parent or guardian

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.

The only exceptions to this law are listed below:

- 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.
- 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
 - Note: A student who has been granted special permission due to an IEP, 504 plan, or medical need will face consequences for using the device outside of the given permission.

When are students allowed to use devices?	
Area of Directed Use	Appropriate Use
Before/After School (including school bus transit)	YES
In Classroom	NO
During Passing Period	NO
In the Cafeteria (during lunch)	NO

Inappropriate use of a personal communication device during the school day will result in disciplinary action in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

1. Device Violation Protocol

- First Offense:
 - Device confiscated by administrator or designee) and stored securely in a designated area (i.e. front office)
 - Parent must retrieve device in person
 - Parent letter sent home outlining guidelines for use
 - Offense notated in Student Information System (Frontline Teams)
 - A copy is given to the student and parent
- Second Offense:
 - Device confiscated by administrator or designee) and stored securely in a designated area (i.e. front office)
 - Parent must retrieve device in person
 - Student receives 3 days of in-school suspension
 - Offense notated in Student Information System (Frontline Teams)
 - A copy is given to the student and parent
- Third Offense:
 - Device confiscated by administrator or designee) and stored securely in a designated area (i.e. front office)
 - Parent must retrieve device in person
 - Mandatory parent conference
 - Behavior contract signed by student and parent
 - Student receives 5 days of in-school suspension
 - Offense notated in Student Information System (Frontline Teams)
 - A copy is given to the student and parent

Fourth Offense and Beyond:

- Device confiscated by administrator or designee) and stored securely in a designated area (i.e. front office)
- Parent must retrieve device in person
- Campus schedules a due process hearing for a 15-day DAEP placement
- Offense notated in Student Information System (Frontline Teams)
 - A copy is given to the student and parent

Any device not claimed within 90 days will be disposed of according to FNCE(LEGAL).

NOTE: In the case of a school or district emergency, the teacher or administrator can allow for a prohibited device to be used.

2. Administrative Steps for Retrieving a Personal Communication Device

Teacher Steps for Addressing Violations

1. Notify the front office or administrator immediately.
2. Document the incident in the classroom behavior log or digital referral.
3. Submit the device to the main office if it is confiscated.
4. Follow up with the student after class to reinforce expectations.

Administrator Steps for Addressing Violations

1. Receive the device and secure it in a locked cabinet.
2. Log the incident into the SIS (Frontline) with date, time, and description.
3. Contact the parent/guardian via phone and email to inform them of the violation.
4. Determine the level of offense and apply the appropriate consequences.
5. Schedule a parent conference if required (3rd offense or higher).
6. Return the device according to the policy timeline.
7. Monitor repeat offenses and update student behavior records accordingly.

School Liability for Devices in School's Possession

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.

3. Parent Communication Plan

- [Parent FAQ](#)
- Pre-semester letter/email to inform families by district and campuses
- Back-to-School Night session
- Ongoing district/campus updates via newsletters, emails, and website
- Standardized violation notices sent home

4. Staff Training

- Refer to [Personal Communication Device Implementation Plan](#)
- Training on handling violations consistently
- Documentation procedures
- Parent communication strategies

5. Student Education

- Campus posters/visuals
- Assemblies or classroom sessions
- Explain law and policy
- Discuss minimizing distractions
- Review consequences and expectations

6. Student Code of Conduct 2025-26 Draft

Here's a copy of the full SCOC Draft: [2025-26 DeSoto ISD Student Code of Conduct \(Draft\)](#)