



Newsletter
January 2025

New Model Policy 524.5: Personal Electronic Communication Devices

School Cell Phone Policy Law

During the 2024 session, the Minnesota legislature enacted Minnesota Statutes 121A.73 (School Cell Phone Policy), which states:

A school district or charter school must adopt a policy on students' possession and use of cell phones in school by March 15, 2025. The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals must collaborate to make best practices available to schools on a range of different strategies in order to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment.

Model Policy 524 Update (June 2024)

In June 2024, MSBA revised Model Policy 524 to include the following:

CELL PHONE USE

The school board directs the superintendent and school district administration to establish rules and procedures regarding student possession and use of cell phones in schools. These rules and procedures should seek to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment. These rules and procedures may be designed for specific school buildings, grade levels, or similar criteria.

[NOTE: In 2024, the Minnesota legislature enacted a law requiring that school districts adopt a policy on students' possession and use of cell phones in school by March 15, 2025. This law does not state that school districts must incorporate specific language or provisions in the school district policy.]

MSBA recognizes the common practice of setting forth cell phone rules in a student handbook or similar document. This Article directs school administration to establish cell phone rules, which the school board may require be presented to the board for approval. This approach enables administrators to craft flexible and specific rules that are specific to grade levels and buildings. The school board may choose to set forth general principles regarding cell phone use in this Article.

Under the new law, the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals will collaborate to make best practices available to schools on a range of different strategies to achieve the goals stated above.]

A similar revision was made for Policy 524 Charter.

These materials are for informational use only and are not to be construed as legal advice. If legal advice is needed, the school district's legal counsel should be contacted. While current at the time it was created, this document may be later superseded by legislative or other action.

New MSBA Model Policy on Personal Electronic Communication Devices

To support schools that prefer to have a separate policy—and to provide provisions that schools may choose to add to their existing rules—MSBA developed new Model Policy 524.5 (*Personal Electronic Communication Devices*). This new policy is posted on the MSBA website.

Schools choosing to adopt this model policy, in whole or in part, should follow the new policy adoption process set forth in MSBA Model Policy 208 (*Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Policies*). A board may determine the steps it will follow under Article IV of this policy.

Schools that adopt Model Policy 524.5 should revise Model Policy 524 (*Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety Policy*) to remove references to cell phones. MSBA has posted a redline version of Model Policy 524 for schools that adopt Model Policy 524.5.

At a future date, MSBA may revise Model Policy 524 to remove references to cell phones. At this time, however, Model Policy 524 will remain unchanged as some schools may prefer to have a single policy.

Notes on Model Policy 524.5

Introduction

NOTE: Minnesota law requires school districts to have a cell phone policy starting on March 15, 2025.

Article III.E: Definition of “Personal Electronic Communication Device”

NOTE: Schools may choose to use a different term than “personal electronic communication device.” Similarly, schools may choose to include a sentence stating that, for purposes of this policy, “personal device” is synonymous with “personal electronic communication device.”

Article IV.A: Personal Electronic Communication Device Use

NOTE: Schools may choose to create rules for all students regardless of age by adopting and amending Subparagraph 1. Schools may choose to have some rules for all students (Subparagraph 1) and some rules that are grade/school specific (Subparagraphs 2-4). MSBA includes provisions in 2-4 that some schools have utilized. Schools that have adopted policies with specific rules for middle school/junior high school have typically blended the rules for elementary and high schools.

Current and recent Policy Services Newsletters can be found on the MSBA website under Services—Policy Services,

If you have questions about Policy Services, how to navigate the online Policy Reference Manual, or the content of the model policies, please contact Terry Morrow at (507) 934-8126 or (800) 324-4459 or by email at tmorrow@mnmsba.org

Jaymyson Sillman (jsillman@mnmsba.org) can assist if technological issues arise related to accessing the model policies or the revisions.

