Williamson County Board Policy Committee

September 29, 2025 6:00 PM

Williamson County Administrative Complex Training Center, 1st Floor

Policy Chair - Jay Galbreath
Policy Committee - Drason Beasley, Donna Clements, Dennis Driggers, Margie Johnson and Melissa Wyatt

1. **Agenda**
2. **Board Policies Second Reading**
    a. 3.202 Emergency Preparedness Plan
3. **Board Policies First Reading**
    a. 4.401 Textbooks and Instructional Materials
    b. 6.312 Use of Wireless Communication Devices

Williamson County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in October	**Emergency Preparedness Plan**	**3.202**	**08/18/25**
		Rescinds: **3.202**	Issued: **08/19/24**

General

The Superintendent of Schools shall be responsible for developing, maintaining, and acquiring board approval of the district Emergency Preparedness Plan[1] which shall include procedures for bomb threats, civil disturbances, armed intruders, earthquakes, fires, tornadoes or other severe weather, and medical emergencies.

The principal of each school shall develop and implement emergency preparedness drills which shall be approved by the Superintendent of Schools. When appropriate, such drills shall be held in conjunction with emergency response agencies.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall conduct an after-action review ~~debrief~~ of an event involving a major incident, major accident, and/or major response at a school or schools ~~should occur~~ as immediately after the event as possible. ~~The debrief of the event may focus on lessons learned, and may utilize an after-action review and report, which can be a structured process for analyzing what happened and why it happened.~~

FIRE AND SAFETY DRILLS

The principal shall ensure that one (1) fire drill requiring full evacuation is given every thirty (30) school days, with no more than two (2) fire drills occurring during the first thirty (30) full days of the school year. Additionally, he/she shall ensure that four (4) fire safety educational announcements are conducted throughout the year.[2]

The principal shall ensure that three (3) additional safety drills are given during the school year. These drills may cover inclement weather, earthquakes, armed intruders, or other emergency drills that do not require full evacuation. A record of all fire or safety drills, including the time and date, shall be kept in each school's office.[3]

The principal shall regularly check the quantity, locations, and conditions of fire extinguishers and shall give all school personnel instructions on how to properly use fire extinguishers.

The district shall work with local law enforcement and the local fire department to develop a procedure for identifying the cause of a fire alarm activation. This procedure must be in place by January 1, 2025, and shall be reviewed and updated annually thereafter.[4]

ANNUAL DRILLS[5]

The principal shall ensure that the school safety team conducts each of the following types of drills annually:

1. An armed intruder drill in coordination with local law enforcement;

2. An incident command drill; and

3. An emergency safety bus drill.

AED DRILLS[6]

All schools shall conduct a CPR and AED drill to ensure awareness of the steps that shall be taken in the event of a medical emergency. The principal shall ensure that the drill occurs.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop the necessary administrative procedures on AED and CPR training, planning, notification, and maintenance to comply with state law.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES/PANDEMIC FLU[7]

In the event of medical emergencies such as a pandemic flu outbreak, school officials shall cooperate and consult with the local and state health departments and other local emergency or healthcare providers in protecting students and the community from further infection. The Director of Schools shall develop procedures for health emergencies in accordance with state law.

REMOTE LEARNING DRILLS[8]

At least once each school year, a remote learning drill shall be conducted. The drill shall accurately reflect how students will transition to remote learning in the event of a disruption to school operations. Students shall not be asked or required to transition to remote learning at any time during the drill.

Legal References

1. TRR/MS 0520-01-02-.30(2); TCA 49-6-804; TCA 49-6-805(8)
2. TCA 68-102-137(b); Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 315
3. TCA 68-102-137(f)
4. TCA 49-6-807(e)
5. TCA 49-6-807
6. TCA 49-2-122; TCA 49-6-1208
7. TCA 49-6-3004(a), (e); TCA 49-5-404
8. TCA 49-2-139

Cross References

Safety 3.201
Community Use of School Facilities 3.206

POLICY REVIEW OR CREATION REQUEST

This form will be completed for all new policies and all recommendations for revisions to or deletions of policies of the Williamson County Board of Education. Attach any information which would be helpful to understand the proposed changes or actions.

Recommended by: Staff ☐ General Counsel ☐ Board Member X ____Tony Bostic_____

Date Submitted to General Counsel: _____March 28th 2025_____

Recommendation: add ☐, revise X, or delete ☐ the following Policy number(s) and title(s):

4.401 Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Brief summary of the proposed addition or changes:

Pg 2 line 6 – add bullet point stating "*Have any data or studies showing better student outcomes with particular consideration given to any ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Tier data*."

Pg 2 line 12 – change language to "*Any Members of the Board may also choose to serve as ex officio members.*"

Pg 2 line 13 – add language stating, "…submitted to the Board for approval *along with written explanations from teachers, supervisors of teachers, and parents describing the reasoning for recommending the chosen textbook or instructional material. Additionally, any WCS teacher, having distinction within the field of the curriculum which is under consideration for adoption, are encouraged to provide written explanations to the Board regarding their reasoning for recommending a particular textbook or instructional material up for consideration.*"

Pg 2 before line 14 – add new paragraph language stating, "*After the textbook adoption committees' selections are submitted to the Board for approval, a presentation shall be made to the Board with all committee members and any WCS teachers that wish to attend. The purpose of this presentation shall be to facilitate dialogue and discussion between the Board and committee members and teachers in order to provide reasoning and/or feedback about the textbook recommendations submitted by the committee."*

Brief justification of why additions or changes needed or required:

To hone our textbook adoption process in order to build stronger rapport and collaboration between the Board, teachers, and Central Office

Staff analysis of the proposed addition or changes in terms of the following:

Legal implications; educational benefits; impact on the staff at the building level; impact on staff at the district level; immediate and future changes in numbers of assignments of personnel; immediate and future budgetary impact.

Tony Bostic *3/28/25*

Name of Individual Submitting Policy for Review **Date**

Williamson County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in November	**Textbooks and Instructional Materials**	**4.401**	**10/24/22**
		Rescinds: **4.401**	Issued: **03/21/22**

General

All classrooms shall be equipped with the textbooks and instructional materials needed to provide quality learning experiences for students in accordance with state law.[1] The Board shall provide a wide range of textbooks and instructional materials that cover all levels of difficulty, generate critical thinking, and support the educational programs.

Part Definitions

Board adopted textbooks and instructional materials shall be defined as any medium or manual of instruction which contains a systematic presentation of the principles of a subject, and which constitutes a major instructional vehicle for that subject.[2]

Supplementary instructional materials shall be defined as additional resources selected by educators to enhance instruction in alignment with the Tennessee academic standards.

SELECTION OF BOARD ADOPTED TEXTBOOKS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The selection of textbooks to be considered for adoption by the Board and instructional materials shall be completed according to the laws and policies required by the State of Tennessee and the State Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission.[3] The responsibility for Board approved textbook and instructional materials selection rests with the local textbook selection committees, subject to approval by the Board. The Board will appoint textbook selection review committees to review the textbooks and instructional materials that are proposed for adoption. The committees shall be established by grade level and subject matter fields.

The Executive Committee shall prepare a recommended list of committee members for the Board to consider. Members of the committee shall be teachers, supervisors of teachers, and parents with children currently enrolled in a school under the jurisdiction of the Board at the time of the appointment. Teachers and supervisors who are appointed shall be teaching or supervising the respective grade level or subject at the time of appointment, must be licensed in Tennessee with endorsements in the grade level or subject matter, and must have at least three years of experience teaching in public schools. All committee members shall be voting members. The Board may appoint experts in the grade level or subject matter field for the textbooks and instructional materials to be reviewed.

The review shall include an examination as to whether the textbooks or instructional materials:

- Conform to the standards for their subject areas or grade levels;

- Are free of any clear, substantive, factual or grammatical errors;

- Contain content that is accurate and free of bias;

- Comply with and reflect the values expressed in §49-6-1028(b), if the textbook or instructional materials are being considered for adoption as a textbook or instructional materials for education of students in general studies and specifically in United States history and this nation's republican form of government.

- ***Have any data or studies showing better student outcomes with particular consideration given to any ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Tier data.***

Experts may be college professors or credentialed subject matter specialists. Upon recommendation by the Superintendent, the Board shall determine whether an individual is a credentialed subject matter specialist. Experts so appointed shall not be voting members of any committee but may present information to the committee for consideration.

The Superintendent shall be an ex officio member of all committees appointed and shall not be a voting member. ***Any*** members of the Board may also serve as ex officio members. The textbook adoption committees' selections will be submitted to the Board for approval ***along with written explanations from teachers, supervisors of teachers, and parents describing the reasoning for recommending a chosen textbook or instructional material. Additionally, any WCS teacher having distinction within the field of the curriculum which is under consideration for adoption are encouraged to provide written explanations to the Board regarding their reasoning for recommending a particular textbook or instructional material up for consideration.***

After the textbook adoption committee's selections are submitted to the Board for approval, a presentation shall be made to the Board with all committee members and any WCS teachers that wish to attend. The purpose of this presentation shall be to facilitate dialogue and discussion between the Board and committee members and teachers in order to provide reasoning and/or feedback about the textbook recommendations submitted by the committee.

All committee members must swear to the oath required by state law. The members of the committees appointed shall serve for the length of time the adoption process for which they are appointed lasts.

At least one set of publishers provided review materials to be considered by the committees shall be available at the central office during the review period for examination by Board members, WCS employees, and the general public. Online access to the textbooks and materials shall be provided to the fullest extent possible. The public will be made aware of the dates the textbooks and materials are available for review prior to their adoption.[4]

SELECTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The responsibility for selection of supplementary instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school system. Selection of supplementary instructional materials may involve many people including library media specialists, curriculum specialists, teachers, students, principals, administrators, parents, and the community.

Gifts of supplementary instructional materials, meeting the selection standards, may be accepted.

INSPECTION AND REVIEW

Board approved textbooks, instructional materials and/or supplementary instructional materials shall be available for inspection by parents/guardians upon request. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for inspection of materials and distribute these procedures to each principal.[5]

CARE OF BOARD APPROVED TEXTBOOKS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Instructional materials supplied to students by the Board are district property, and the teacher shall see that they are taken care of and returned by the close of the school year. Parents and guardians shall accept full responsibility for the proper care, preservation, return, or replacement of instructional materials that are issued to their children.

Fines may be assessed at the discretion of the principal in cases where the student or parent/guardian damages, loses, or defaces the textbook or instructional material. The principal may include with the notice a provision stating that failure to pay the fine imposed within a reasonable time may result in the imposition of one of the following sanctions:

1. Refusal to issue any additional textbooks until restitution is made; or

2. Withholding all report cards, diplomas, certificates of progress, or transcripts until restitution is made.

The principal also reserves the right to waive fines when appropriate.

RECONSIDERATION OF BOARD APPROVED TEXTBOOKS, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS[6]

A complaint about Board approved textbooks, instructional materials and supplementary instructional materials may only be made by a current WCS parent/guardian, employee, or student. If there is a complaint, this process is to be followed:

1. Inform the complainant of the selection procedures and make no commitments.

2. Request the complainant complete and submit a Request for Reconsideration of Board Approved Textbooks, Instructional Materials and/or Supplementary Materials form.

3. Inform the Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate personnel.

4. Keep challenged materials available for use during the reconsideration process. An individual parent may request that his/her child not have to use a given Board approved textbook, instructional material or supplementary material provided a written request is made to the principal. The materials shall be removed immediately if they:

a. Were created to align exclusively with Common Core; or

b. Are marketed or otherwise identified as Common Core textbooks or instructional materials.

5. The principal shall request review of the challenged materials by an ad hoc materials review committee within fifteen (15) working days. The ad hoc review committee is appointed by the Superintendent or designee within seven (7) working days of receiving the request for review and includes representatives from central office staff, classroom teachers, one or more parents, and may include one or more students.

6. The ad hoc review committee shall take the following steps after receiving the challenged materials:

   a. Read, view, or listen to the material in its entirety;
   b. Check general acceptance of the material by reading recognized and evaluative reviews;
   c. Determine the extent to which the material supports the curriculum;
   d. Complete the appropriate Checklist for Reconsideration of Board Approved Textbooks, Instructional Materials and/or Supplementary Instructional Materials, judging the material for its strength and value;
   e. Invite the complainant to an interview; and
   f. Present decision to complainant and the Superintendent or designee.

If the complainant or any affected employee of WCS wishes further action after receiving the decision of the ad hoc review committee, an appeal may be made to the Board of Education within fifteen (15) working days of the date of the ad hoc review committee decision. This appeal should be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools who shall schedule the matter on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the School Board. If no appeal is filed within the above deadline, the determination of the ad hoc review committee shall be final for up to two (2) years. The decision of the Board may be binding for up to two (2) years, and the Board may determine the scope of its decision throughout the district.

Legal References

1. TCA 49-6-2207; TCA 49-2-203(a)(3)
2. TRR/MS 0520-05-01-.01
3. TCA 49-6-2207(c), (e), (f); TCA 49-6-2202(d); TRR/MS 0520-01-18-.02
4. 20 USCA § 1232h(a); TCA 49-6-7003
5. TCA 49-6-7003
6. TCA 49-1-302(a)(8); TCA 49-1-314; TCA 49-6-2206

Cross References

Surplus Property Sales 2.403
Library Materials 4.403
Student Fees and Fines 6.709

POLICY REVIEW OR CREATION REQUEST

This form will be completed for all new policies and all recommendations for revisions to or deletions of policies of the Williamson County Board of Education. Attach any information which would be helpful to understand the proposed changes or actions.

Recommended by: Staff ☐ General Counsel ☐ Board Member X _ Claire Reeves__

Date Submitted to General Counsel:
_9/23/25_____

Recommendation: add ☐, revise X, or delete ☐ the following Policy number(s) and title(s):

Use of Wireless Communication Devices 6.312

During the June work session and board meeting, discussion made it clear that some on the Board did not want to delay updates to the wireless communication device policy. In fact, the purpose of scheduling committee discussion about this policy for August and September was to ensure the Board would have time to review their suggestions and revise the policy in time for meaningful implementation during the current school year.

However, the committee's recommendation included a delay that wasn't requested by the Board nor aligned with the urgency we expressed in those meetings. To that end, I'm submitting this policy review request for our October policy meeting to align with both the new state law now in effect and the Board's originally stated timeline for action.

Brief summary of the proposed addition or changes:

Please refer to attached documents. I have included the rewritten policy, the committee feedback document from the September work session, a comparison chart outlining the current policy and the proposed revisions, and emails sent to the Board from parents in support of an "Away for the Day" policy, including three committee members, and Warren County's "Away for the Day" policy.

Elementary Committee Feedback Committee Concerns	**How Revised Policy 6.312 Addresses Concerns**
Clarify that 'silenced' also means off-body	Explicitly states devices must be stored off-body, not in pockets or on wrists.
Watches are still a concern	Smartwatches fall under the same policy as phones and must also be stored off-body.
Reinforce cubby/backpack storage	Allows for classroom-specific storage solutions.
Developmentally appropriate consequences	Includes tiered, age-appropriate consequences provided by the committee.

Middle School Committee Feedback

Committee Concerns	How Revised Policy 6.312 Addresses Concerns
Clarity on 'silenced' devices	Updated to require devices be 'silenced and stored off the body'.
Define educational purpose	Policy defines specific educational use, aligned with curriculum.
Keep lunch, transitions, study hall off-limits	Policy consistently prohibits use during all school day periods.
Consequences tied to Code of Conduct	Includes tiered, age-appropriate consequences provided by the committee.

High School Committee Feedback

Committee Concerns	How Revised Policy 6.312 Addresses Concerns
Anticipated resistance to lunch restrictions	Policy enforces consistent bell-to-bell rules, including lunch. To prepare students and staff, enforcement would begin January 2026.
Concern about student/parent communication	Emergency Communication section outlines staff-led parent contact and safe opportunities for student contact when appropriate.
Request for clearer language about transition periods	Defines 'school day' to include class transitions, eliminating ambiguity.
Support for phone pouches or lockers	Policy permits storage in lockers, backpacks, or teacher-designated areas, supporting pouch/locker implementation.
Clarify educational use	Defines educational use with clear examples and prohibits general access to devices.
Graduated consequences	Includes tiered, age-appropriate consequences provided by the committee.

Family Feedback Trends From Survey

Family Feedback	How Revised Policy 6.312 Addresses Family Feedback
Desire for clearer enforcement	Policy includes visible, structured consequence ladders for all levels.
Concern about emergency access and safety	Includes language about emergency communication through school channels.
Concern about distractions, social issues, and mental health	Policy rationale ties device restriction to improved focus and well-being.
Mixed views on device use during non-instructional times	Policy provides consistent bell-to-bell expectations for ease of enforcement.
Support for stricter device rules, especially for younger students	Applies consistent rules across K–12 while preserving flexibility via accommodations.
Recognition of need for balance and accommodations	Preserves exceptions for IEPs, 504s, Health Plans, and assistive technology.

Brief justification of why additions or changes needed or required:

School districts across the nation are moving toward consistent "Away for the Day" policies for grades K-12 and for good reason. The revised policy begins with a purpose section so that all stakeholders understand the rationale for the policy.

What is one of the biggest benefits of "Away for the Day"? Enforcement becomes easier and more consistent when the rules are consistent across all grade levels. Right now, our policy allows partial device usage in high school. That inconsistency actually makes it harder for staff to enforce. When phones are allowed "sometimes" or in certain places, it creates gray areas and leads to frustration for both students and teachers.

We see this reflected in the data (https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/06/12/72-percent-of-us-high-school-teachers-say-cellphone-distraction-is-a-major-problem-in-the-classroom/) :

- 60% of high school teachers say phone enforcement is difficult (Pew Research).
- Only 12% of elementary teachers say the same. One key difference is that policies for younger grades tend to follow a clear "Away for the Day" model.

Furthermore, what's working for our middle schoolers should work for our high schoolers. A clear, consistent policy of away, off the body, all day is easier to enforce and helps everyone stay on the same page.

And let's be honest: if parents check their high schooler's screen time, it's usually not spent on college or job apps. It's overwhelmingly spent on social media (TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram) not on ACT scheduling or "essential communication." That kind of phone use is a distraction from learning and face-to-face socializing.

Yes, high schoolers need to learn responsibility, but that includes knowing when and where to use their phones. Tasks like scheduling the ACT, replying to a boss, or checking notifications don't need to happen during lunch. That's what before and after school is for.

Independence for our high schoolers doesn't come from phone access during the school day. Real independence means managing your time, planning ahead, and owning your responsibilities. That's the kind of growth this policy encourages.

Staff analysis of the proposed addition or changes in terms of the following:
Legal implications; educational benefits; impact on the staff at the building level; impact on staff at the district level; immediate and future changes in numbers of assignments of personnel; immediate and future budgetary impact.

Claire Reeves	**9/23/25**
Name of Individual Submitting Policy for Review	**Date**

Policy 6.312 Use of Wireless Communication Device Policy (Away for the Day)

Purpose

This policy is required by Tennessee law and establishes clear and consistent expectations for the possession and use of personal wireless communication devices by K–12 students. Its purpose is to ensure that instructional time and school environments remain free from unnecessary distractions and to promote student engagement, well-being, safety, and a positive school environment.

Research and safety experts agree that limiting device use during the school day:

- Improves learning by keeping students focused and engaged.
- Supports well-being by reducing social pressures, bullying, and anxiety.
- Strengthens safety by ensuring students follow staff directions in an emergency. Parents will be notified through the school's emergency communication system. Safety experts caution that parents calling or texting students during an emergency can put students at greater risk by drawing attention to them and disrupting established safety procedures.

Definition

For purposes of this policy, wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Smart watches
- Ear buds / AirPods
- iPods / MP3 players
- CD players, Walkmans, or radios
- Pagers or beepers
- Handheld electronic games
- Non-school issued laptops or tablets or any portable devices capable of communication or gaming

General Rule

K–12 students are prohibited from using personal wireless communication devices during the entire school day (i.e., first bell of the day to last bell of the day), including instructional periods, class tranistions, study halls, and lunch time.

All devices must remain silenced and stored off the body in:

- Backpacks, purses, or similar personal bags
- Teacher-designated storage areas within the school setting
- Lockers
- Personal vehicles

Devices may not be stored in clothing, pockets, or on the body, as this allows for easy access.

School Setting

"School setting" includes all areas of the campus or school-sponsored environments during the school day, whether instruction is actively occurring or not, including but not limited to:

- Classrooms and libraries
- Lunch areas and auditoriums
- Gymnasiums and physical education areas (indoor and outdoor)
- Performing arts areas
- Locker rooms
- Administrative offices

- Nurse's office, counseling/medical/psychological spaces
- Bathrooms
- School Buses and other district-provided transportation for field trips/travel during school day

Leaving class during instructional time to use a device in another school setting is a violation of this policy.

Emergency Communication

All staff members have access to communication devices during the school day and may contact the school office in case of an emergency.

In an emergency, school staff will initiate established communication protocols to notify parents/guardians by text message, email, and/or phone call. Students will also be permitted to contact a parent/guardian once it is safe to do so under staff direction.

Safety experts strongly caution against parents calling or texting students during an active school emergency, as this can draw attention to students' locations and interfere with their ability to follow safety instructions. Parents are urged to await official communication from the school.

In non-emergency situations, parents/guardians will be contacted by school officials via text message, email, or phone call.

Exceptions

Students may use personal communication devices only when:

1. Authorized by a teacher for a specific educational purpose. A "specific educational purpose" means that the device is being used as a tool directly tied to the learning objectives of the lesson and under active teacher supervision.
   Examples include:
   a. Accessing a teacher-directed digital resource not otherwise available on school-issued technology.
   b. Using translation or accessibility applications as part of instructional activities.
   c. Documenting a project, experiment, or performance when directed by the teacher.
   d. Participating in structured class activities (e.g., polling software, classroom response systems) where the teacher requires device access.

   Educational purpose does not include:
   a. Free or unsupervised internet browsing.
   b. Listening to music, playing games, or watching videos unrelated to instruction.
   c. Messaging, social media, or personal communication.
   d. Using the device as a reward or filler activity in lieu of teacher-directed instruction.

   Teacher authorization may not be granted for the purpose of convenience when school-issued devices or classroom materials are available for instructional purposes. Permission to use a personal device is an exception, not the norm, and should be revoked immediately if misused.

2. Required by an IEP, 504 Plan, or Health Care Plan.

3. Needed to manage a documented medical condition in accordance with a healthcare provider's orders.

4. Used as approved assistive technology. Assistive technology refers to any item, equipment, or system that increases, maintains, or improves the functional capabilities of a student with a disability.
   Examples include:
   a. A smartphone or tablet with text-to-speech or speech-to-text features for students with reading or writing disabilities.

b. Accessibility apps that provide communication support for students with speech or language impairments.
c. Audio recording functions permitted for students with documented memory, auditory processing, or attention-related disabilities.

Use of assistive technology must be:

a. Clearly documented in the student's IEP, 504 Plan, or Health Care Plan
b. Approved by the case manager, school administrator, or designated staff.
c. Limited to functions directly tied to the accommodation or support need.
d. Any use of a device outside of the documented accommodation (e.g., texting, gaming, or personal use) is a violation of this policy and subject to disciplinary action.

Student use under these exceptions is not a student right but a limited accommodation/authorization.

Prohibited Uses

Students are prohibited from:

1. Using devices in any manner that threatens academic integrity, disrupts learning, or violates privacy rights.
2. Using devices to cyberbully, harass, or threaten another student
3. Taking, sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails, or other material depicting sexually explicit conduct, as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 39-17-1003 and related statutes (including § 39-17-1002), while the student is on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or on school buses or vehicles provided by the district.
4. Recording or photographing without consent.
5. Students may not use personal devices to access the internet through unauthorized means (e.g., personal hotspots, VPNs, or circumvention of school network filters).
6. Charging devices using school resources during the school day.

Search & Seizure of Devices

By bringing a device to school, students and parents/guardians acknowledge that the device is subject to search by a school administrator if there is reasonable suspicion, based on objective facts, that the device contains evidence of a violation of school policy or law. Any search will be conducted in a manner consistent with federal law (New Jersey v. T.L.O.) and Tennessee law (T.C.A. § 49-6-4204 and § 49-6-4205) and will be limited in scope to the suspected violation. Content or images that violate state or federal law may be referred to law enforcement.

Staff Expectations

Teachers and staff members will consistently and fairly enforce this regulation. Teachers will clearly designate storage areas in classrooms for students who cannot store devices in backpacks, lockers, or purses/bags.

Teachers and staff will not use phone breaks as student rewards.

Teachers and staff should model appropriate device use by refraining from personal use during instructional time.

Student & Family Responsibilities

Bringing a personal wireless communication device to school is strictly optional. These devices are not required for instruction and do not enhance learning during the school day.

Students are solely responsible for any personal wireless communication devices they choose to bring to school or school-sponsored events. The school district will not assume responsible for loss, theft, damage, or unauthorized use of these devices.

Consequences

Any visible device during school hours may be confiscated. Confiscated devices will be secured and returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action. Repeated violations will lead to progressive consequences. Final determination of disciplinary measures rests with school administration.

Elementary School

- First Offense: Device placed in cubby/backpack. Teacher/staff member communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Device goes home with student at end of day.
- Second Offense: Device sent to administrator. Administrator communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Device returned to student at end of day.
- Third Offense: Device sent to administrator. Administrator communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Parent/guardian required to pick up the device.

Middle School

- First Offense: Teacher/staff member redirects student to put device away. Reteaching of expectations. Student stores device away until end of class/day.
- Second Offense: Teacher/staff member confiscates device and delivers to administration. Parent notified; parent must pick up device at end of day.
- Third Offense: Escalated consequences for non-compliance, which may include loss of privilege (device held in office), demerits, or detention, or in-school suspension.

High School

- First Offense: Teacher/staff member redirects student to put device away. Reteaching of expectations. Student stores device away until end of class/day.
- Second Offense: Devic confiscated and delivered to administrator who notifies parent and reviews expectations with student. Parent conference held as needed.
- Third Offense: Escalated consequences for repeated non-compliance. Focus shifts to addressing pattern of behavior. Examples of escalated consequences include loss of privilege (device held in office), detention, or in-school suspension.

Additional Consequences (All Grades)

- Referral to law enforcement may occur if device use involved content or behavior that violates state or federal law.
- Progressive consequences beyond the third offense may be applied at the discretion of the school administration in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct.

Legal References

- **New Jersey v. T.L.O. (1985):** Established that school officials may search students on "reasonable suspicion," a lower standard than probable cause.
- **T.C.A. § 49-6-4204, § 49-6-4205:** School officials may search students' personal possessions (including electronic devices) with reasonable suspicion.

- **T.C.A. § 39-17-1002, § 39-17-1003:** Defines and criminalizes sexual exploitation of minors, covering sexually explicit conduct.
- **T.C.A. § 49-6-1401 et seq.:** (Bullying & Harassment statutes, if cross-referenced under "prohibited uses").
- Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 103

Cross References

- Code of Conduct 6.300

Old vs New Policy Comparison

Section	Current Policy	New Policy
Purpose	No purpose section.	Explicit Purpose section. States policy required by TN law (Public Acts of 2025, Chapter 103). Adds expert rationale citing safety, well-being, and learning benefits.
Definitions	Devices defined generally as any portable wireless device with voice, messaging, or data capability (wearable tech, cell phones, laptops, tablets, gaming devices).	Expanded definition: includes phones, smart watches, earbuds, iPods, MP3 players, radios, pagers, handheld games, non-school issued laptops or tablets, or any portable communication/gaming device.
General Rule	Grades K-8: devices silenced, not used. Grades 9-12: devices silenced, not used except during lunch.	Prohibits use during entire school day (first to last bell), including transitions, study halls, and lunch. Stronger than old policy. Devices must be stored off-body.
School Setting	No definition of 'school setting' provided. Policy focused on possession/use by grade level rather than locations.	Defines 'school setting' comprehensively: classrooms, gyms, libraries, admin, nurse, counseling, bathrooms, locker rooms, buses, and field trips.
Emergency Communication	Emergency plan: parents alerted via text/email/phone in event of emergency. No detail on student contact or safety expert guidance.	Detailed section: staff initiate emergency protocols; students may contact parents once safe. Explicit safety expert caution against parents calling/texting during emergencies.
Exceptions	Permitted uses: emergencies, teacher authorization for educational purposes, healthcare plans, IEP/504, assistive technology. Broad and flexible with little restriction.	Exceptions narrowly defined. Teacher authorization requires direct link to instruction. Convenience uses excluded. Includes detailed safeguards for assistive technology. Exceptions explicitly not student rights but accommodations.
Prohibited Uses	Prohibited uses implied by context but not detailed. Did not specify cyberbullying, unauthorized internet use, charging, or privacy violations.	Expanded prohibited uses: academic dishonesty, cyberbullying, harassment, threats, explicit conduct (T.C.A. 39-17-1002 & 1003), unauthorized internet (hotspots/VPNs), recording without consent, charging at school.
Search & Seizure	Search authority implied under general district authority, not detailed. No explicit reference to T.L.O. or TN law in this version.	Detailed section: searches by administrators only, based on reasonable suspicion. References New Jersey v. T.L.O., T.C.A. 49-6-4204, 49-6-4205. Scope limited to suspected violation.
Staff Expectations	No staff expectations outlined. Enforcement not detailed beyond confiscation possibility.	Staff must enforce consistently, designate storage, model good behavior, and not use phones as rewards. Clearer than old policy.
Student & Family Responsibilities	Students permitted to bring devices. No statement that bringing is optional or not required. Liability not explicitly disclaimed.	Explicitly optional. Not required for instruction or learning. Students solely responsible. District not liable for loss, theft, or damage.
Consequences	Unauthorized use may result in confiscation for the day. General disciplinary action referenced, but no tiered framework or escalation by grade.	Tiered consequences by grade band (elementary, middle, high) with escalating actions (reteaching, parent pick-up, loss of privilege, detention/ISS). Referral to law enforcement possible. Progressive consequences beyond third offense allowed.

Wireless Communication Device 6.312

Elementary (K-5)

Identify areas you feel additional refinements should be made and provide suggestions for those refinements.

Area or Time:	Refinement Needed:	Suggested Refinements to Policy:
Before or After School		
Bus	☐ Yes ☑ No	Phones on buses are difficult to manage; administrators will respond if issues arise.
Hallway during arrival and dismissal times	☐ Yes ☑ No	Included within the definition of the school day.
On campus early arrivers and those staying late	☐ Yes ☑ No	See above*
During the School Day		
Class Change - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	N/A
Lunch - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	N/A
Study Hall - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	N/A
Recess - *Not allowed per TN Recess Law*		
Language in Policy		
"When authorized by a teacher for educational purposes"	☐ Yes ☑ No	Clarify non-school issued laptop or tablet.
Devices are "*Silenced*"	☑ Yes ☐ No	Silenced, and add stored off the body. As the policy currently reads, the student could have it on their body if it is silenced. How would this be monitored during recess, lunch, etc.?
Devices are "*Not used during the school day*"	☐ Yes ☑ No	More clarification on what "school day" means. Determine when this would be appropriate.
Additional areas not identified or change in wording	☑ Yes ☐ No	Add clarification as it relates to ear buds/airpods (line 7-8 of the policy)

Consequences	☐ Align to the code of conduct ☐ Create consequences as part of this policy ☑ No recommendations on consequences State any clarifications in this space.
If refinements are made to the current policy, when should they be implemented? 2026-2027 school year	

***Consensus was reached in all areas.**

Wireless Communication Device Policy Review 6.312

Middle (6-8)

Identify areas you feel additional refinements should be made and provide suggestions for those refinements.

Area or Time:	Refinement Needed:	Suggested Refinements to Policy:
Before or After School		
Bus	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement that no policies needed but education may need to be given to families
Hallway during arrival and dismissal times	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement that no policy change needed. Leave up to the different schools to create policy based on needs.
On campus early arrivers and those staying late	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement that no policy change needed. Hard to set a policy with all the different situations.
During the School Day		
Class Change - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement no policy change needed
Lunch - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement no policy change needed
Study Hall - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement no policy change
Recess - *Not allowed per TN Recess Law*		
Language in Policy		
"When authorized by a teacher for educational purposes"	☑ Yes ☐ No	Need to define educational purpose (example: access to curriculum)
Devices are "*Silenced*"	☑ Yes ☐ No	Change to be more clear "Silenced and not on the body"
Devices are "*Not used during the school day*"	☐ Yes ☑ No	Reached agreement no policy change
Additional areas not identified or change in wording	☑ Yes ☐ No	Change the wording on line 9 - the word may implies possible- change to state "A student

		shall have access…”
Consequences	☐ Align to the code of conduct ☐ Create consequences as part of this policy ☑ No recommendations on consequences	
If refinements are made to the current policy, when should they be implemented? 2026-2027 school year		

Wireless Communication Device Policy Review 6.312

High (9-12)

Identify areas you feel additional refinements should be made and provide suggestions for those refinements.

Area or Time:	Refinement Needed:	Suggested Refinements to Policy:
Before or After School		
Bus	☐ Yes ☑ No	
Hallway during arrival and dismissal times	☐ Yes ☑ No	
On campus early arrivers and those staying late	☐ Yes ☑ No	
During the School Day		
Class Change - Not allowed in current policy	☑ Yes ☐ No	Needs to be stated explicitly in policy "not used during the school day including transition/passing periods"
Lunch	☐ Yes ☑ No	
Study Hall - Not allowed in current policy	☐ Yes ☑ No	
Recess - *Not allowed per TN Recess Law*		
Additional areas not identified or change in wording	☑ Yes ☐ No	New wording "The only time the device may be used during school hours is during the lunch period for 9th-12th grade students." Some were concerned that gaming devices were included and thought it should be removed.
Language in Policy		
"When authorized by a teacher for educational purposes"	☐ Yes ☑ No	

Devices are "*Silenced*"	☐ Yes ☑ No	
Devices are "*Not used during the school day*"	☑ Yes ☐ No	New wording "The only time the device may be used during school hours is during the lunch period for 9th-12th grade students."
Consequences	☑ Align to the code of conduct ☐ Create consequences as part of this policy ☐ No recommendations on consequences State any clarifications in this space. We liked the consequences presented by administrators at the meeting and felt they were appropriately tiered for the grade levels (K-5, 6-8, 9-12)	
If refinements are made to the current policy, when should they be implemented? Refinements should be made at the end of the school year based upon collection and analysis of data about this year's enforcement. The High School group strongly feels that high school level students as emerging adults need opportunities to practice age-appropriate independence in preparation for their imminent college and career paths. Additionally, high school students use their personal emails/phone numbers for communications from college applications, ACT/AP testing, jobs, etc that our network security does not allow them to access. Having the ability to access phones at lunch allows them opportunities to address any deadlines or other tasks associated with preparation for their post-graduation journey.		

We reached consensus in all areas.

QUESTION: Some schools have students put phones in pouches or lockers. Our policy just says students may "possess devices" - Our team believes the pouches/lockers are beneficial for students - can this be added to the policy? - Some type of storage

From: [redacted] - Adam is on the technology use committee
Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 2:28 PM
To: Claire Reeves [redacted]
Subject: WCS Personal Device Policy - New State Law

Dear Claire,

I'm a WCS dad of four and wanted to reach out to you about WCS's personal device policy. As you likely know, the Tennessee State Legislature has passed a new law which requires all school districts, including WCS, to develop a wireless communication device policy. WCS already has acceptable use guidelines, but they are very permissive, allowing students to use devices during non-instructional time, or with teacher permission.

The state law provides a "floor," requiring districts to restrict use during instructional time without teacher permission, but leaves it to districts to decide in their policies about use during non-instructional time, and when teachers can grant permission for students to use the phone.

The law takes effect on July 1, and WCS is required to develop a policy by the start of the school year. As you board deliberate on the policy, I encourage you to include two key elements:

- Enact a "bell-to-bell" (also called "away for the day") policy, where students are not permitted to use their phone the entire day. Phone use during instructional time is already restricted by WCS guidelines, but phone use during non-instructional time may be even more harmful, contributing to bullying, anxiety and social disconnection. This is true across all age bands, from elementary through twelfth grade.
- Eliminate use of phones in class with teacher permission. Although flexibility is always appealing, there are three main issues with this:
    - teachers requiring cell phone use for instruction, which creates issues for students without phones (for example, using personal phones in art class for drawing, or requiring phone usage to submit weightlifting records in PE). Since WCS provides devices for students, asking students to use their personal phones is unnecessary and inappropriate.
    - teachers using phone access as an incentive. In many classes, teachers assign a worksheet and tell students that they can use their phones when the worksheet is done. This creates an incentive for students to rush through the worksheet, and crowds out instruction that could be taking place.
    - Inconsistencies between classrooms and across the district. In my conversations with staff and parents around WCS, I was surprised to learn how much variability there is by school. Teachers I've spoken with would prefer a district-wide uniform policy so they don't have to play the role of "phone police" in their classrooms.

I'm certain you're familiar with the ample research on the downsides of personal phone use in schools, but I have found Away for the Day and the Phone Free Schools Movement to be particularly helpful. I have included some key research results at the bottom of my email.

I know that some parents prefer to be able to contact their students during the day, but from talking to teachers and administrators, this seems to yield more problems than benefits. The

state law includes exceptions for emergencies, and parents can always reach their student by calling the office. In a true emergency, students need to be following the instructions of their teachers, not texting with their parents. In national surveys, a substantial majority of parents support bell-to-bell restrictions.

Arkansas, South Carolina and Louisiana have implemented statewide bell-to-bell policies, as have nearly all private schools in and around Williamson County have In fact, about 40% of schools in the US have already implemented bell-to-bell policies, and the proportion is skyrocketing

I encourage the WCS board to pass a bell-to-bell policy for the benefit of our students. Thanks for considering, and for all the work you do for WCS.

Adam

PS I'm on the newly-formed WCS screen time committee. I'm very excited about this, but the committee is not scheduled to meet over the summer, so our report won't be available in time for your policymaking. My sense is that WCS staff are planning to recommend doing the "floor" required by state law (which is already in our acceptable use guidelines) and to defer further decision making until the 2026-2027 school year, which is too late, in my opinion, so I hope the board will act now.

Benefits and Outcomes of Bell-to-Bell Policies

Academic Performance

Removing or limiting phones can boost student learning. For example:

- A UK study found schools that instituted phone bans saw test scores improve by ~6%, especially among lower-achieving students.

- In the U.S., an analysis by Yondr in 2024 across 37,000 grades found student pass rates and GPAs rose by an average of 6.3% after phone restrictions and high school juniors and seniors had a 38% higher probability of earning passing grades in core classes after phones were removed

- At KIPP NYC College Prep, stricter phone rules coincided with higher AP exam scores and overall grade improvements post-pandemic.

- Teachers report being able to cover more material and assign longer tasks once phones are removed from the classroom.

Student Behavior and Discipline

Bell-to-bell policies have correlated with significant reductions in student misbehavior:

- Bentonville, Arkansas reported a 57% drop in verbal or physical aggression incidents post-ban.

- A California high school using Yondr pouches saw a 75% reduction in behavioral referrals after adopting a phone-free policy.

- NEA survey (2024): 90% of teachers supported prohibiting phones during instructional time, 83% supported full-day bans.

Student Engagement and Social Interaction

Bell-to-bell policies appear to encourage more peer interaction:

- After Newburgh Free Academy in New York banned phones, teachers noted the lunchroom became noisier with kids playing cards instead of watching Tiktok.

- KIPP NYC observed a 50% increase in attendance at after-school events post-ban.

- Bentonville teachers reported 86% of students were more engaged in lessons, and 75% showed more in-class peer interaction after phone bans.

Mental Health and Well-Being

In terms of mental health, research on bell-to-bell policies suggests:

- Schools report reductions in cyberbullying incidents and viral challenge disruptions after banning phones. xxxx

- Students often report feeling less overwhelmed by social media drama during school hours post-ban.

School Safety Considerations

- Some parents worry about communication during emergencies, but educators and safety experts caution that student cell phone use during emergencies increases danger by distracting students from safety and emergency response directions from teachers and staff, promoting rumors that can cause panic and impeding public safety response by causing parents to rush to the scene before first responders can secure the scene and evacuate students (we saw this recently at Ravenswood).

- Student use of cell phones during emergencies can interfere with first responder communication.

- Even worse, cell phone use can directly endanger students by attracting intruders to the "ding" of a student's phone.

- The mother of a student who died in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting has advocated for phone bans along with school safety investments.

- Schools typically permit emergency exceptions, and emphasize rapid communication through official channels.

Email from Chad Grout on July 12, 2025
Hello, Board Members.

I have never reached out, nor have I met any of you before. I have a daughter at [redacted] and two daughters [redacted] and one son [redacted]

Recently I was made aware of a new school policy that is either banning or reducing device usage in Williamson County schools. BRAVO. These devices are stealing so much from our society in so many ways, especially our youth. I support full banning of all devices in all schools, so thank you for anything you choose to do along that front.

By the way, I went to my first soccer game at Geodis Park the other day, as a guest. You have to use your phone to scan your tickets to get into the stadium. You have to use your phone to pay for concessions (no cash; they do still take cards). Our hosts had an upgraded seat section so they had to scan their phones for us to access our seats. Yes, this meant they had to escort us to the bathroom so they could scan us back into our seats. It has absolutely gotten ridiculous.

Thank you for looking out for our kids.

Chad Grout
Brentwood, TN
[redacted]

Email from [redacted] – July 10, 2025
Williamson County Board-

My [redacted] and I have read The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt. [redacted] dad, and I are passionate about schools becoming phone free bell-to-bell for k-12, including lunch time and including phones not being with students in backpacks during the day. [redacted]

[redacted] Classmates have repeatedly shared sexual content [redacted] during class hours, both on their personal devices and on school Chromebooks through YouTube. Through social media, due to same grade classmates sending male full frontal nudity of themselves (more than 2 dozen images on Snapchat), [redacted] decided to give up socials in February 2025 (Snapchat, Insta, TikTok), after which [redacted] experienced extreme loneliness at the lunch table, as [redacted] table-mates continued with their social media habits, leaving [redacted] to sit in silence. As a result, [redacted] current solution for [redacted] is to allow dual enrollment as much as possible from home so that [redacted] can have social interaction (with family) during the day, while still participating in [redacted] and extra-curricular school activities. If [redacted] were to offer social freedom (phones free) during lunch, however, [redacted] would be motivated to actually be able to talk to [redacted] friends during the day.

As a counselor at a local church camp where phones are not allowed for kids 5th-HS graduates 2013-current, I have noticed that while some kids may be hesitant to turn in phones initially, none of them asks for [redacted] phone when real life social interaction is offered as an alternative. The freedom from phones comes when the majority of peers are not turning to their phones for social interaction. Giving up a personal phone does not bring relief from the phone addiction for teens; the relief comes when a group of friends practice social freedom together. When offered to option to use social media or not, the truth of addiction tells us teens will almost always choose the phones. But, if we can offer these highly social kids an environment where friend groups are interacting without screens, I believe they will show us a way out of depression, loneliness, and anxiety. They are delightful individuals who are desperate for us to speak up for their social wellbeing. And, I believe many younger Gen Z in our community are ready to work on a solution.

Thank you!

[redacted]

Katie Schlacter emailed on May 18, 2025 – Katie is on the technology use committee
Dear WCS school board members,

My name is Katie Schlacter and I am a parent of [redacted]. First of all, thank you very much for your service on the school board.

I'm sure you're aware of the recent legislation that passed in TN that prohibits cell phone use during school instructional time. I am thrilled about this progress and think it's a step in the right direction. As I understand it, a new Tennessee state law requires all districts to develop a personal device policy this summer before the 2025/2026 school year starts. **I hope that Williamson County Schools will consider adopting a phone-free schools policy that encompasses the entire day, during both instructional time and free time.**

The presence of smartphones undermines our students' educational experience and creates an unnecessary burden for our teachers as they struggle to police these devices. Smartphones facilitate cyberbullying, physical fights, privacy violations, and exposure to inappropriate and harmful content. Lack of face-to-face interactions during free periods diminish our children's empathy and leave them unable to handle conflict resolution.

Research shows that smart phones are addictive and distracting, impede executive funtioning skills, lead to poor academic performance, harm school safety efforts and even enable cheating on exams. Further, the surgeon general last year asked Congress to put a warning on social media apps because of mental health dangers that they pose. Problematic phone use can no longer be considered an individual decision. In a school environment, it negatively impacts the community as a whole. These issues spill over to the non-users, as bystanders in the hall or in the lunchroom are also exposed to the distractions and harmful content, even if they do not have a phone.

I am on the newly formed WCS screen time committee. I look forward to exploring the many facets digital technology use in schools with this group over the next year. However, I hope the board will act now on the issue of personal devices. From my experience and from what I have heard from other parents and teachers in our community, this as an urgent issue for our schools that cannot wait.

Again, I very much appreciate your work on behalf of the community.

Best,
Katie Schlacter
[redacted]

Email from Crystal Basham sent on May 16, 2025

Dear School Board Members,

I hope this message finds you well. As a parent of [redacted] children in Williamson County Schools, I want to thank you for your commitment to the development, growth, and education of our children. Our family moved to Williamson County four years ago to allow our children to take full advantage of this amazing school district, and we are so grateful for the opportunities each of them are afforded in our local schools. We believe in the role of public schools and the vital role they play in our communities as they foster young minds and raise future leaders - so thank you for the part that you play.

It is my understanding that you will be voting as a board on the Personal Device Policy that WCS will adopt for the 25/26 school year. I am writing to strongly encourage and ask you to adopt a "bell-to-bell" policy for the sake of our children - their mental health, their social/emotional development, and their academic achievement. As I'm sure you are aware, there is now an abundance of research and evidence regarding phone usage during the critically important developmental stage of our students, and in particular, the impact these devices have when used during school hours. Overwhelmingly, the data is very clear - our children deserve better, and we are the ones that can do that for them.

There are a number of resources you can reference for this research, but Jonathan Haidt's recent book, *The Anxious Generation*, has been very informative for my husband and I as we shape our own plans for screen-usage in our home, as well the direction and intention we hope our local school system adapts, and quickly.

Haidt's research highlights a troubling link between the rise of constant phone access and the sharp increase in anxiety, depression, and attention difficulties in adolescents. He emphasizes that young people today are part of the first generation to grow up with constant digital distractions and it isn't turning out well for them - since 2010, rates of teen anxiety and depression in the U.S. have more than doubled—closely mirroring the explosion in smartphone and social media use.

I believe that a bell-to-bell policy could help mitigate these issues by allowing students, at the very least, to re-engage with in-person learning and peer interaction without the distraction of these devices. Research both nationally and internationally shows that test scores improve, student mental health improves, bullying decreases, and student misbehavior declines. Not to mention the face-to-face interactions that allow our students to develop strong interpersonal social and emotional skills that will serve them for the remainder of their lives are significantly improved.

While we understand that technology plays an important role in education, it's critical that we distinguish between tools that support learning and tools that distract from it. Personal devices are not educational necessities in the classroom—and in many cases, they undermine the focus and social development that schools are meant to foster.

I ask the board to review the research and consider adopting a bell-to-bell personal device policy to create a healthier and more focused learning environment for all students.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the well-being of our students.

Sincerely,

Crystal Basham

[redacted]

Parent/Community Member

Email from Allyson Lifsey sent on May 16, 2025 – Allyson is on the Technology Use Committee

Hello,

My name is Ally Lifsey. I'm the mom of a [redacted] and also a member of the newly-formed WCS Screen Time Committee which I'm excited to be a part of. However, I'm aware that Tennessee's new law requires a policy addressing personal tech in schools prior to the 2025-2026 school year, and we won't have time to deliver guidance via the committee prior to then. Given these time constraints, I'm reaching out to personally advocate for a bell-to-bell ban on all personal tech devices.

I could write a long e-mail about all the reasons why I believe this is the way to go and ideas for how to implement it and responses to common concerns, but Phone Free Schools has already created an amazing Administrator Toolkit with all the relevant information. I've attached it here. I urge you to carefully look it over and consider it when drafting your policy for the upcoming school year.

I'm passionate about making sure that what we do in school is evidence-based to the extent that it can be, and we now have a lot of data that we didn't have before about technology and its effects on our kids. Given this information, it's our duty to change our approach.

Thanks for considering,
Ally

Warren County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in March	**Restrictions on Student Possession and Use of Personal Electronic Devices**	**6.312**	**07/24/25**
		Rescinds: **6.312**	Issued: **06/24/24**

The increase in use of cell phones and personal communication devices by students during the school day has become far more than a distraction in the school environment. These devices are being used by students as a means of cheating on tests, taking inappropriate pictures and videos of students and staff for sharing and posting across the internet, threatening and/or bullying other students, and engaging in an excessive amount of social interaction during instructional time.

Therefore, students may only possess a wireless communication device so long as such devices are turned off and stored out of sight and in school issued storage locations for the entirety of the school day. Such devices include any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two (2) or more parties, such as wearable technology, cell phones, non-school issued laptops or tablets, and gaming devices.

Students who wish to carry a cell phone with them to and from school must keep the device turned off and stored (e.g., kept in the student's automobile, or other school approved location at all times during the entire school day). For the purposes of this policy the school day includes the entire day from the school start time or bell that indicates the start of the school day until the final dismissal time of the school day. The school is not responsible for any loss or theft of the device while on school property.

A student may only be permitted to utilize a wireless communication device under the following circumstances;

1. In case of emergency;
2. When authorized by a teacher (with prior authorization from principal)
3. To manage the student's health, as document 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.[1]

EXAMINATION OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

A wireless communication device may be subject to search within the parameters set out in WBOE Policy 6.303 and state and federal law. Notice that improperly stored wireless communication devices may be subject to search shall be included in the handbook disseminated to the parents and/or guardians of each student.

CELL PHONE/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE OFFENSE GUIDELINES

A student found in unauthorized possession of any type of cell phone or personal communication device during the school day shall have the device taken from him or her and kept by the school Principal or designee until the parent is notified. The parent may pick up the device at a time and location designated by the principal at the close of the next school day following the day that the parent received notification or earlier at the principal's discretion. Thereafter, the parent may pick up the device by appointment after the student serves the designated detention. Moreover, for such subsequent violation of this policy, the student shall receive additional consequences in accordance with the district-wide communications device offense guidelines.

AGREEMENT TO RULES AND POLICY

By allowing a student to bring a cell phone or other personal communication device to school, the parent and the student voluntarily agree to abide by these disciplinary rules, restrictions and offense guidelines. The District, its schools, nor its employees assume any responsibility or liability for the loss or damage to any student's personal communication device, or for the unauthorized use of student's personal communication device. takes no responsibility for confiscated items and will not compensate the owner for any lost, stolen, or damaged confiscated items while in the custody of the District or while otherwise on school property.

The Director of Schools (or designee) is responsible for administering this policy which applies to all students in all Warren County schools.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICE OFFENSE GUIDELINES

1ST OFFENSE	2ND OFFENSE	3RD OFFENSE	4TH & + OFFENSE
• Device is collected & the offense is documented. • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office • Warning-Student will serve detention for the next offense • Device is collected & the offense is documented • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office	• Device is collected & the offense is documented. • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office • Student is assigned to either 2 days ASD, or 1 week of lunch detention • Device is collected & the offense is documented • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office • 2 days of ASD/EL6 or 1	• Device is collected & the offense is documented. • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office • Student serves 2 days of ISS. • Student is not allowed to bring the device back for the rest of the school year • Device is collected & the offense is	• Device is collected & the offense is documented. • K-5 could result in suspension or other disciplinary action • Device is collected & the offense is documented • Short term suspension – 3 days or less • Alternative placement referral

• Warning-Student will serve detention for the next offense	week of lunch detention	documented • Parent is notified and must pick up device from office • 2 days of ISS • Behavior Contract • Revocation of parking privilege • Restriction of attendance at school-sponsored activities (games, dances, etc.)	

Legal References

1. Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 103

Cross References

Code of Conduct 6.300

Williamson County Board of Education

Monitoring:	Descriptor Term:	Descriptor Code:	Issued Date:
Review: Annually, in March	**Use of Wireless Communication Devices**	**6.312**	**06/16/25**
		Rescinds:	Issued:

PURPOSE

This policy is required by Tennessee law and establishes clear and consistent expectations for the possession and use of personal wireless communication devices by K–12 students. Its purpose is to ensure that instructional time and school environments remain free from unnecessary distractions and to promote student engagement, well-being, safety, and a positive school environment.

Research and safety experts agree that limiting device use during the school day:

- ***Improves learning by keeping students focused and engaged.***
- ***Supports well-being by reducing social pressures, bullying, and anxiety.***
- ***Strengthens safety by ensuring students follow staff directions in an emergency. Parents will be notified through the school's emergency communication system. Safety experts caution that parents calling or texting students during an emergency can put students at greater risk by drawing attention to them and disrupting established safety procedures.***

DEFINITION

For purposes of this policy, wireless communication devices include but are not limited to:

- ***Cell phones;***
- ***Smart watches;***
- ***Ear buds / AirPods iPods / MP3 players;***
- ***CD players, Walkmans, or radios;***
- ***Pagers or beepers;***
- ***Handheld electronic games; and***
- ***Non-school issued laptops or tablets or any portable devices capable of communication or gaming.***

GENERAL

K–12 students are prohibited from using personal wireless communication devices during the entire school day (i.e., first bell of the day to last bell of the day), including instructional periods, class transitions, study halls, and lunch time. All devices must remain silenced and stored off the body in:

- ***Backpacks, purses, or similar personal bags;***
- ***Teacher-designated storage areas within the school setting;***
- ***Lockers; or***

- *Personal vehicles.*

Devices may not be stored in clothing, pockets, or on the body, as this allows for easy access.

~~Students in grades K-8 may possess wireless communication devices so long as such devices are silenced and not used during the school day. Students in grades 9-12 may possess wireless communication devices so long as such devices are silenced and not used during the school day. Students in grades 9-12 may use a wireless communication device during the student's lunch period. Such devices include any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two (2) or more parties, such as wearable technology, cell phones, laptops, tablets, and gaming devices.~~

SCHOOL SETTING

"School setting" includes all areas of the campus or school-sponsored environments during the school day, whether instruction is actively occurring or not, including but not limited to:

- *Classrooms and libraries;*
- *Lunch areas and auditoriums;*
- *Gymnasiums and physical education areas (indoor and outdoor);*
- *Performing arts areas;*
- *Locker rooms;*
- *Administrative offices;*
- *Nurse's office, counseling/medical/psychological spaces; or*
- *Bathrooms School Buses and other district-provided transportation for field trips/travel during school day.*

Leaving class during instructional time to use a device in another school setting is a violation of this policy.

EXCEPTIONS

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

Students may use personal communication devices only when:

1. *Authorized by a teacher for a specific educational purpose. A "specific educational purpose" means that the device is being used as a tool directly tied to the learning objectives of the lesson and under active teacher supervision.*

Examples include:

   a. *Accessing a teacher-directed digital resource not otherwise available on school-issued technology.*
   b. *Using translation or accessibility applications as part of instructional activities.*
   c. *Documenting a project, experiment, or performance when directed by the teacher.*
   d. *Participating in structured class activities (e.g., polling software, classroom response systems) where the teacher requires device access.*

Educational purpose does not include:

a. Free or unsupervised internet browsing.
b. Listening to music, playing games, or watching videos unrelated to instruction.
c. Messaging, social media, or personal communication.
d. Using the device as a reward or filler activity in lieu of teacher-directed instruction.

Teacher authorization may not be granted for the purpose of convenience when school-issued devices or classroom materials are available for instructional purposes. Permission to use a personal device is an exception, not the norm, and should be revoked immediately if misused.

2. To manage the student's health, as documented in the student's individual healthcare plan;

3. When the possession or use is required by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP), active 504 plan, or individual learning plan; or

4. 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.

~~5. In the event of an emergency;~~

~~6. When authorized by a teacher for educational purposes;~~

PROHIBITED USES

Students are prohibited from:

1. Using devices in any manner that threatens academic integrity, disrupts learning, or violates privacy rights.
2. Using devices to cyberbully, harass, or threaten another student.
3. Taking, sending, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails, or other material depicting sexual activity, as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated § 39-17-1003 and related statutes (including § 39-17-1002), while the student is on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or on school buses or vehicles provided by the district.
4. Recording or photographing without consent.
5. Students may not use personal devices to access the internet through unauthorized means (e.g., personal hotspots, VPNs, or circumvention of school network filters).
6. Charging devices using school resources during the school day.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE OF DEVICES

By bringing a device to school, students and parents/guardians acknowledge that the device is subject to search by a school administrator if there is reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a violation of school policy or law. Any search will be conducted in a manner consistent with federal law and Tennessee law (T.C.A. § 49-6-4204 and § 49-6-4205) and will be limited in scope to the suspected violation. Content or images that violate state or federal law may be referred to law enforcement.

STAFF EXPECTATIONS

Teachers and staff members will consistently and fairly enforce this regulation. Teachers will clearly designate storage areas in classrooms for students who cannot store devices in backpacks, lockers, or purses/bags.

Teachers and staff will not use phone breaks as student rewards.

Teachers and staff should model appropriate device use by refraining from personal use during instructional time.

STUDENT AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Bringing a personal wireless communication device to school is strictly optional. These devices are not required for instruction and do not enhance learning during the school day.

Students are solely responsible for any personal wireless communication devices they choose to bring to school or school-sponsored events. The school district will not assume responsible for loss, theft, damage, or unauthorized use of these devices.

CONSEQUENCES

Any visible device during school hours may be confiscated. Confiscated devices will be secured and returned to the student at the end of the school day.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action. Repeated violations will lead to progressive consequences. Final determination of disciplinary measures rests with school administration.

Elementary School

- *First Offense: Device placed in cubby/backpack. Teacher/staff member communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Device goes home with student at end of day.*
- *Second Offense: Device sent to administrator. Administrator communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Device returned to student at end of day.*
- *Third Offense: Device sent to administrator. Administrator communicates with student and family, reteaching of expectations. Parent/guardian required to pick up the device.*

Middle School

- *First Offense: Teacher/staff member redirects student to put device away. Reteaching of expectations. Student stores device away until end of class/day.*
- *Second Offense: Teacher/staff member confiscates device and delivers to administration. Parent notified; parent must pick up device at end of day.*
- *Third Offense: Escalated consequences for non-compliance, which may include loss of privilege (device held in office), demerits, or detention, or in-school suspension.*

High School

- ***First Offense: Teacher/staff member redirects student to put device away. Reteaching of expectations. Student stores device away until end of class/day.***
- ***Second Offense: Devic confiscated and delivered to administrator who notifies parent and reviews expectations with student. Parent conference held as needed.***
- ***Third Offense: Escalated consequences for repeated non-compliance. Focus shifts to addressing pattern of behavior. Examples of escalated consequences include loss of privilege (device held in office), detention, or in-school suspension.***

Additional Consequences (All Grades)

- ***Referral to law enforcement may occur if device use involved content or behavior that violates state or federal law.***
- ***Progressive consequences beyond the third offense may be applied at the discretion of the school administration in alignment with the Student Code of Conduct.***

~~Unauthorized use of a device may result in confiscation of a student's wireless communication device for the duration of the school day. A student in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action.~~

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION ~~PLAN~~

All staff members have access to communication devices during the school day and may contact the school office in case of an emergency. In an emergency, school staff will initiate established communication protocols to notify parents/guardians by text message, email, and/or phone call. Students will also be permitted to contact a parent/guardian once it is safe to do so under staff direction.

Safety experts strongly caution against parents calling or texting students during an active school emergency, as this can draw attention to students' locations and interfere with their ability to follow safety instructions. Parents are urged to await official communication from the school.

In non-emergency situations, parents/guardians will be contacted by school officials via text message, email, or phone call.

~~In the event of an emergency or possible emergency occurring at the school where the student is enrolled, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be alerted by text message and/or email and/or phone call.~~

Legal References

1. Public Acts of 2025, Chapter No. 103

Cross References

Code of Conduct 6.300