

Cell Phone Policy 25-26

Newburg School District: Policy on Electronic Personal Communication Devices

Introduction:

The Newburg School District is committed to fostering a safe, focused, and distraction-free learning environment for all students and staff. In accordance with Missouri Senate Bill 68, this policy outlines the rules regarding student use of electronic personal communication devices during the school day. Our goals include complying with state law, ensuring that instructional time is maximized, and fostering an environment where students can fully engage in their education without the interruptions and social pressures accompanied with device use.

Policy:

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the use and display of all Electronic Personal Communication Devices by students are strictly prohibited during the school day. The school day for the purpose of this policy is defined as the period of time beginning when a student arrives on school grounds and ending at the conclusion of the official school day – including instructional time, passing periods, breaks, meal times, and study halls.

An Electronic Personal Communication Device is defined by Missouri law as “a portable device that is used to initiate, receive, store, or view communication, information, images, or data electronically.” Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Tablets
- Headphones and earbuds (wireless or wired)

General Rules:

- Students are prohibited from using, displaying, or having these devices visible during the school day.
- Upon arrival at school, all Electronic Personal Communication Devices must be powered off and stored in a designated secure location (e.g., student locker, backpack, designated area in the classroom, etc).
- These devices may not be used for any purpose, including but not limited to, making calls, sending texts, accessing the internet, playing games, or taking photos/videos, unless explicitly authorized by school personnel as an exception under this policy.

Exceptions to the Policy:

Limited exceptions may be granted under the following conditions, as per state law:

- **Instructional Use:** A teacher or staff member may direct the use of an Electronic Personal Communication Device. as a specific instructional tool for a class activity. The use of the device must be for the duration of the teacher-directed activity only and is not a general exception for the entire class period.
- **Health/Medical Needs:** A student with a documented medical or disability-related need, as outlined in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, may be permitted to use a device as a necessary accommodation. This must be pre-approved by the school administration and documented by a physician.
- **Emergency Situations:** In the event of a school-wide emergency, such as a natural disaster or other significant crisis, students may be permitted to use their device to communicate with family members. This use will be directed by a school staff member, administrator, or emergency personnel.
- **Other Potential Exceptions:** Other possible exceptions include those necessary for compliance with Individualized Health Care Plans, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 regarding English language learners.

Consequences for Violations:

Jr High/High School

Violations of this policy will result in the confiscation of the device and escalating disciplinary action.

- **First Offense:** The device is immediately confiscated and taken to the school office. The student may pick up the device at the end of the school day. The student will receive up to one day of In-School Suspension (ISS).
- **Second Offense:** The device is confiscated and stored in the school office. A parent or legal guardian must come to the school to retrieve the device. The student will be assigned 4 hours of Friday Night Detention or Monday Detention.
- **Third Offense:** The device is confiscated and can only be picked up by a parent or legal guardian. A parent conference with a school administrator will be required. The student will be assigned 3-5 days of ISS.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** The device is confiscated and further disciplinary action will be administered. Repeated violations of this policy may result in up to 10 days of Out of School Suspension (OSS).

Elementary prek-6th grade

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- **Second Offense:** The device is confiscated and stored in the school office. A parent or legal guardian must come to the school to retrieve the device.
- **Third Offense:** The device is confiscated and can only be picked up by a parent or legal guardian. A parent conference with a school administrator will be required. The student will be assigned 1 day of ISS.
- **Subsequent Offenses:** The device is confiscated and further disciplinary action will be administered. Repeated violations of this policy may result in up to 10 days of In School Suspension (ISS).

For all Students: In cases where a student uses an Electronic Personal Communication Device to engage in bullying, academic dishonesty, or any other violation of the student code of conduct, separate and additional disciplinary actions will be taken as per the relevant school policy.

Parent/Guardian Communication:

Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate with their children through the appropriate school office in case of an emergency or urgent need. School personnel will ensure that urgent messages are delivered to students in a timely manner.

Disclaimer:

The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. Students who bring these devices to school do so at their own risk. The school retains the right to search a student's Electronic Personal Communication Device if there is reasonable suspicion that the device was used to violate school policies, rules, or regulations.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and may be updated to reflect changes in state law, technology, or district needs. All updates will be communicated to students, parents, and staff.

This policy is in effect for the entire school day, every school day, including half-days and early release days.