



New Student Cell Phone and Personal Device Rules & Guidelines

Dear Parents/Guardians,

You are receiving this letter to inform you about our school's student cell phone/personal device policy for the 2025-2026 school year. We recognize that the prevalence of cell phones among students has increased significantly in recent years. Now, according to HCS policy 6.312, cell phones and personal digital devices are no longer permitted for students at school. In the school environment, cell phones can be a distraction, an interruption, and occasionally, a tool for exchanging inappropriate information.

AWAY FOR THE DAY!

Starting the first day, cell phones or other electronic devices will not be permitted, including any portable wireless device that has the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more people, such as wearable technology, cell phones, laptops, tablets, and gaming devices. We believe this new policy will create a more positive learning environment and allow our students to be more engaged in classroom activities, and, conversely, less likely to be distracted by non-school activities.

It will allow teachers to focus on lessons, instead of cell phone distractions in the classrooms. As more research on the impacts of cell phone use on adolescents is being published, we understand that it can lead to increased mental health issues in adolescents. As protecting and supporting the mental health of our students is a priority, we believe that eliminating cell phone use during school will assist us in these endeavors.

WHY do we require cell phones to be off and put away during school?

- **Relationships:** In order to be connected to learning in the classrooms students must be connected to one another and to the instructional staff. Significant research and experience have determined that student access to cell phones distracts from the learning environment and creates a significant barrier to the interactions and connections crucial to rich, relationship-based learning.
- **Focus:** Students learn best when they are "present" and engaged in the learning activities and interactions from moment to moment. Research has determined that not only cell phone use but also the proximity of cell phone availability and access for students during class is a distraction from learning.
- **Safety:** It is acknowledged that families may choose to have students carry cell phones for a variety of reasons related to safety; however, cell phones as vehicles for social media access and use have proven detrimental to our school community.

HOW do students manage phones?

- Cell phones are required to be off and put away in backpacks/lockers during the school day. Phones are never allowed in bathrooms or locker rooms.
- Students who have a medical or other emergency reason for accessing their phone during the day should have a health plan on file in the school office and discuss an exception with an administrator.
- If parents need to reach their child during the school day, please call the main office.

We will ensure students receive messages in a timely manner. For all other non-emergency messages, students may check their phones after school as they leave the building.

IF a student does not meet this expectation, what happens?

- On the **first** offense, a student will receive a verbal warning and reminder of the policy by school staff. Student will appropriately store the device per district policy and procedure.
- On the **second** offence, the device will be confiscated by an administrator, and the parent/caregiver will be notified. The device will be returned by administrative staff at the end of the school day to the student.
- If there is a **third** offense, the device will be confiscated by an administrator, and the parent/caregiver will be notified. The device will be returned to the parent/caregiver.
- If there is a **fourth** offense, the device will be confiscated by an administrator, the parent/caregiver will be notified, and a conference will be scheduled. The device will be returned to the parent/caregiver at the end of the conference. 3 days of **ISS** will be assigned.
- If there is a **fifth** offense, the device will be confiscated by an administrator, the parent/caregiver will be notified, and a conference will be scheduled. The device will be returned to the parent/caregiver at the end of the conference. Student will no longer be permitted to carry a device on campus. 3 days of **OSS** will be assigned.

Please note that under the new policy, any devices brought to school are the **sole responsibility of the student**, and the school will not be held liable for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

Please review this letter with your student prior to the start of school. Thank you for your continued support in ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment for your child. If you have any questions regarding our cell phone policy and procedures, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly.

Sincerely,

Amie Marsh
Superintendent
Haywood County Schools