

## **USE OF CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOLS**

### **(Student Wireless Communication Device Use)**

#### **Policy Statement**

This policy is adopted by the Central Consolidated School District in compliance with the New Mexico Anti-Distracted Law (Section 1. A new section of the Public School Code) and informed by comprehensive survey results from our dedicated educators. Recognizing the critical importance of an optimal learning environment, student focus, and mental well-being, this policy aims to minimize distractions from wireless communication devices during instructional time while allowing for necessary and authorized uses.

#### **Definitions**

As used in this policy, "wireless communication device" means a portable electronic device capable of transmitting voice, text, or data, including a: 1) cellular phone, smartphone, or smartwatch; 2) tablet computer; 3) laptop computer; or 4) gaming device.

#### **General Prohibition During Instructional Hours**

To foster an environment conducive to learning and minimize disruptions, students are generally prohibited from using wireless communication devices during instructional hours. This includes, but is not limited to, classrooms, laboratories, and any other designated learning spaces during scheduled class time.

#### **Permissible Uses**

Notwithstanding the general prohibition, a student may use a wireless communication device during instructional hours only under the following circumstances:

- **Educational Purposes:** A teacher may explicitly authorize a student to use a wireless communication device for specific, planned educational purposes directly related to the lesson. Such use must be integrated into the lesson plan and supervised by the teacher.
- **Emergencies:** In the event of a genuine emergency, a student may use a wireless communication device to contact a parent or guardian. All non-emergency communication with parents/guardians during school hours should be facilitated through the school office.

- **Health Care Management:** A student may use a wireless communication device to manage their health care needs, as required.
- **Accessibility and Assistive Technologies:** Use of wireless communication devices for accessibility purposes, including text-to-speech, speech-to-text, or other assistive technologies that aid in communication, navigation, or learning, is permitted.
- **Medical Necessity or IEP Accommodation:** Use of a wireless communication device is permitted if it is a medical necessity, an accommodation for a student with a disability, or explicitly included in a student's individualized education program (IEP).

### **Use During Non-Instructional Hours**

Students are permitted to use wireless communication devices during designated non-instructional hours, such as lunch breaks and before/after school, in appropriate areas. The school administration reserves the right to define and communicate these designated times and areas.

### **School-Provided Storage Solutions**

To support this policy and minimize distractions, the School District will implement school-provided phone storage solutions (e.g., pouches, lockers) for students during instructional time. Students will be required to store their wireless communication devices in these designated solutions upon entering the classroom or school building, as per school-specific procedures, and may retrieve them at the end of instructional time or the school day. Students are solely responsible for their devices, and the District is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged devices. The District will not search for, replace, or reimburse students for any lost or stolen device.

### **Enforcement and Consequences**

**Consistent Enforcement:** All school staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, are required to consistently enforce this wireless communication device policy across all classrooms and school premises. Inconsistency in enforcement undermines the policy's effectiveness and will be addressed through appropriate professional development and accountability measures.

**Consequences for Violation:** Violations of this policy will result in clear and immediate consequences, which may include, but are not limited to:

- Initial warning and device confiscation for the remainder of the class period or school day.
- Parental notification and required pick-up of the device.

- Detention or other disciplinary actions.
- Repeated violations may lead to escalated disciplinary measures as outlined in the student code of conduct.

***Protections for Student Privacy:*** This policy includes protections for student privacy and confidentiality related to the permissible use of a wireless communication device at school.

### **Parental Involvement and Communication**

The School District will actively engage parents and guardians in discussions about this policy, emphasizing the benefits for student learning, focus, and mental health. Parents will be informed about the policy's details, emergency communication protocols (contacting the school office directly), and encouraged to reinforce responsible device usage at home.

### **Staff Wireless Communication Device Use**

School staff are expected to model appropriate wireless communication device use. During instructional time and student supervision, staff should refrain from personal device use unless it is for an emergency, a medical necessity, or directly related to instructional or supervisory duties.

### **Publication and Review**

Upon adoption, this wireless communication device policy will be published on the Central Consolidated School District's official website. This policy will be reviewed annually by the School Board, in consultation with educators, parents, and students, to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance to the evolving educational landscape.

*Adopted:* June 17, 2025

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