

## **6.20 *Electronic Communication Devices***

In compliance with Alabama Law (FOCUS ACT), Dale County Schools is committed to creating a focused learning environment that minimizes distractions caused by personal electronic devices during the school day. This policy outlines the guidelines regarding students' use of cell phones and wireless communication devices.

Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to, a cellular telephone, tablet computer, laptop computer, pager, gaming device, smart watches, AirPods, or any other portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device.

**Purpose:** This policy intends to foster an educational atmosphere free from distractions and promote the responsible use of technology within the school environment.

Alabama Law (FOCUS ACT) bans cell phones, personal lap tops, smart watches, and other electronic communication devices in public schools. It is the intent of the Dale County Board of Education (DCBOE) to be in compliance with Alabama Law. Students that bring personal mobile electronic devices to school do so at their own risk. The DCBOE accepts no responsibility if a device is lost, stolen, misplaced, damaged or confiscated. The DCBOE accepts no responsibility for viruses, malware or other computer related issues associated with connecting to the DCBOE network. The DCBOE accepts no responsibility for the costs associated with or that may result from the use of data or texting services by a student when using a personal mobile electronic device. Dale County Schools has a 1 to 1 Chromebook Laptop ratio; therefore, phones and personal devices will not be allowed for instruction.

**Grades K-4:** Students in grades K-4 are not allowed to bring cell phones/wireless communication devices as defined in this policy.

**Grades 5-12:** Bell-to-bell ban; students will not be allowed to use personal cell phones/wireless communication devices during the instructional day (from the first bell of the day to the last bell of the day). Cell phones are to be unheard and unseen during the school day.

**Storage:** Grade 5-12 students are encouraged to leave cell phones/wireless communication devices at home. Cell Phones/wireless communication devices brought to school must remain concealed. The cell phone/wireless communication device must be turned off and unseen/unheard. Devices must be stored off their person, such as in a locker, car, or similar storage location (e.g., backpack, purse, gym bag, pouch, or other designated area). Again, the DCBOE accepts no responsibility if a device is lost, stolen, misplaced, damaged or confiscated.

**Searches:** School officials may read, examine, or inspect the contents of any wireless communication device upon reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a

violation of Board policy, the Code of Conduct, or other school rules, provided that the nature and extent of such examination shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation.

**Exceptions to the ban:**

- ✓ Students with individualized education plans (IEPs) that require cell phones for educational purposes.
- ✓ Students with medical needs, such as managing chronic conditions like diabetes through mobile apps.
- ✓ Students who need to use cell phones during an emergency threatening the life or safety of another person.
- ✓ Students who are prompted to use a device to authenticate login credentials for school-related courses/assignments. This will be done under the supervision of a board-approved employee.

The Dale County Board of Education has adopted a policy that aligns with Alabama Law (FOCUS ACT). Violations of the established law and policy are as follows with additional penalties to be imposed based on the severity of the violations.

<b>Violation of Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy</b>	<b>Penalties</b>
1st offense	Device confiscated with office referral; Conference with student; Parental contact; Phone returned to student at end of school day.
2nd offense	Device confiscated with office referral; Conference with student and parent; Phone returned only to the parent
3rd offense	Device confiscated with office referral; Student placed in ISS (2 days); Phone returned only to the parent
4th offense	Device confiscated with office referral; 2 days of OSS; Phone returned at Parent Conference
5th offense/subsequent offenses	Device confiscated with office referral and turned over to Superintendent; 10-day placement in Alternative School

**\* Refusal to turn over a device to school personnel may result in automatic OSS and the number of days will be at administrator's discretion. Severity of refusal to cooperate with the established policy will be at the sole discretion of the school principal or his/her designee.**

**6.20.1 Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Secure Testing Setting By Students** - The possession of digital devices (including but not limited to cell phones, MP3 players, cameras, mobile entertainment, smart watches, social connections, navigation devices, or other telecommunication devices) is strictly prohibited in the testing setting. If a device is in the possession of a student in the testing setting, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. In addition to the cell phone/electronic device policy, the student in violation of having an electronic device in a secure testing area will receive, at a minimum, 2-days OSS.