

Frequently Asked Questions: USD 511 Cell Phone Ban

Why did the district's cell phone policy change?

In spring 2026, Kansas legislators passed a law, and every Kansas school district is now required to ban student access to and use of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices from “bell to bell.”

What does the cell phone ban include?

USD 511 students will not be allowed to have or use any personal electronic communication device on our public school campus between the start and end of the school day. In accordance with Kansas law, this includes during lunch and during passing periods. In our district, the school day is: 8:00 a.m. to 3:20 p.m. for K – 12th grade students.

What is considered a “personal electronic communication device” under the 2026 Kansas law?

This term is defined in the law to include any wireless electronic communication device that provides for voice, text or video communication between two or more parties. This includes a mobile or cellular phone, tablet, computer, watch, wireless headphones or earbuds, text messaging device or personal digital assistant, among others. The law does not restrict devices that students receive from the school district, such as the Chromebooks, laptops, or iPads used in our schools. These are allowed for learning activities, as in the past.

What if I need to contact my child during the school day?

Please call or email the school office; the team will be happy to assist you. In urgent situations, messages may be delivered to students during the school day, or the student may be asked to come to the office to use a phone. Otherwise, students will be notified that they have a note to pick up in the office between class periods or after school.

Can students have their phones with them at school if they do not use them?

The law specifies that the phones and other personal electronic devices must be stored securely and away from the student. Students may choose to leave their device(s) at home or locked in their car at school. If they bring them inside, they will be properly stored according to the law. Here's what to expect: By 8:00 a.m., students will place their device in the cabinets located by the school office. During the school day the cabinets will remain in the school office. At 3:30 p.m., students will be allowed to pick up their device.

What if my child needs to contact me during the school day?

Students should inform their teacher if they need help contacting a parent, sibling or caregiver. They are also welcome to stop by the office during a passing period or lunch time to place a phone call or request help getting a message to a parent, sibling or caregiver.

What if my student needs their phone in an emergency?

The law that was passed in Topeka does not provide an exception for emergencies. Rest assured, in an urgent situation or safety concern on campus, information will be sent through ParentSquare to all parents, guardians, caregivers and other emergency contacts provided during registration/enrollment. If you have questions about how you will receive these updates or need to update your contact information, please call or email the school office for assistance.

Why did the USD 511 Board of Education adopt new and updated policies?

According to the 2026 law, every Kansas school board is required to adopt and update board policies to explain how the new law will be implemented locally. Our student handbooks also have new policies to explain these changes for students and families.

What if my student has a medical issue that requires them to use a device?

The law grants an exception for students who need their device to manage a health issue, such as checking blood sugar. Parents are asked to contact Daryl Daugaard, Superintendent at 620-275-7915 if their child has a medical need. Our school nurse will also be reaching out to those they know may require a device for medical reasons during the day.

What if a student has another special need that requires the use of a device?

Our district policy grants an exception for students who need a device as an accommodation during the school day, if their IEP, Medical Plan or 504 Plan requires it as assistive technology for medically or educationally necessary purposes.