

POLICY 301-11

CELL PHONE USE BY STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

The integration of technology in educational environments continues to evolve as new technologies are developed, which necessitates clear and consistent guidance to ensure that its use in schools supports learning. Students require assistance and instruction to establish healthy and responsible relationships with technology, to build respectful interpersonal communication habits in both digital and physical spaces, and to develop self control.

The Department shall develop and implement guidelines regulating cell phone use by students in schools. Such guidelines shall align with the general learner outcomes delineated in the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards and reflect students' developmental readiness and maturity.

Such guidelines shall specify where and when cell phones may be used; where and when cell phones must be stored; clear and progressive consequences for violations; and shall require at minimum that:

- at the elementary school level, use of cell phones shall be prohibited during school hours;
- at the middle and intermediate school level, use of cell phones shall be prohibited during school hours; and
- at the high school level, use of cell phones shall be prohibited during instructional time; however, schools may exercise discretion regarding the use of cell phones outside of instructional time, including before and after school hours, designated breaks, recesses, and lunch and free periods.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the Department from permitting schools to establish rules and regulations around the use of cell phones that are more restrictive.

Exceptions to these requirements may be made under the following conditions:

- in the event of an emergency or perceived threat to personal safety or the safety of others;
- when expressly permitted by a teacher or administrator for curricular or instructional purposes;
- where required by a licensed physician or surgeon, based on the student's health or well-being needs; or
- where a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) specifically includes provisions for the use of cell phones.

The Department shall periodically review the guidelines and adjust as necessary based on effectiveness and feedback from students, staff, and the community.

[Approved: 02/12/2026]