

University Schools

Monitoring: Review: Annually, in March	Descriptor Term: Use of Personal Communication Devices and Electronic Devices	Descriptor Code: 6.312	Issued Date: June 2025
		Rescinds: 407	Issued:

All students are prohibited from possessing any type of phone or personal communication device that is turned on or in visible/audible use at any time during the regular school day. For the purpose of this policy, possession means being found in or on the person of any student including in any article of clothing, purse, book bag, carry bag, or in any location on school property other than the approved storage location as approved by school officials. For the purposes of this policy the school day begins when the student enters University School Property and ends when the student leaves University School property. In addition to this general prohibition, students are prohibited from:

- Using cell phones and personal communication devices in bathrooms, classrooms and any other area in which academic work is being done unless otherwise instructed by the teacher;
- Charging cell phones and personal communication devices in the school.
- Accessing the University Schools or University of Memphis network with their cell phones and personal communication devices;
- Utilizing Apple Watches or other “smart” watches for personal communication (these may be worn for timekeeping or fitness purposes only);
- Headphones and other Bluetooth enabled devices are not permitted to be worn in class, unless for instructional use as requested by the teacher. When not being used for instruction, these devices must be safely stored throughout the school day;
- Student owned laptops, computers, ipads or other computing devices are prohibited on school grounds unless otherwise approved by the school director in special circumstances. In these unique circumstances, the student will be required to adhere to the University’s acceptable usage policy for their personal device usage.

In accordance with Tennessee Public Chapter 103(1) and University Schools policy,¹ students are prohibited from using personal cell phones during instructional time, including but not limited to class periods, testing environments, and structured learning activities, unless expressly authorized by a school director or their designee.

Exceptions to this policy will be granted on an individual basis for students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or a documented medical condition that requires the use of a personal device during instructional time. In such cases, use must be explicitly authorized by school administration, and appropriate documentation must be on file.

Emergency Communication: University Schools will communicate with families during emergencies through official channels, including PowerSchool-generated text messages, phone calls, and emails, using the contact information provided by parents/guardians in the PowerSchool system. Students will not be expected or required to contact their parents during emergencies using personal devices.

Students who wish to bring a cell phone or other personal communication device with them to and from school must keep the device turned off and stored (e.g., kept in the student's assigned locker, or other school approved location at all times during the entire school day), unless otherwise determined by the school director. Any student who chooses to bring a cell phone or other personal communication device with them to school must have a completed Personal Communications Device

Acknowledgement Form on file with the school office. This form must be signed by both the student and their parent/guardian and includes an acknowledgement that University Schools administrators may, if they have reasonable suspicion to do so, search any student cell phone or personal communication device brought onto University property during school hours or school-related events. Students who do not consent to this search or the usage policies are prohibited from bringing their device on school grounds or to school activities.

A student found in violation of this policy shall have the device taken from him or her and kept by the University School director or designee. The University School director or their designee will notify the parents of the student whose device was confiscated. The parent may pick up the device at the time and location designated by the school director.

University Schools does not take responsibility for personal communication devices, confiscated or stored, and will not compensate the owner for any lost, stolen, or damaged personal communications items while in the custody of the University. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

This policy does not apply to:

- Events and activities that are outside of the regular school day and do not interfere with instructional time (ex: after care, athletic practices and competitions).
- Extracurricular activities and special events.

Legal References

1. Tennessee Public Chapter No. 103 (2025)