

Student Cell Phone & Personal Electronic Devices FAQ's

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

Please call or email your child's school office; the team will be available 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 message 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 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:

- Baxter Springs High School: stored in a school assigned hallway locker.
- Baxter Springs Middle School: stored in a school assigned hallway locker.
- Central Elementary School: details forthcoming.
- Lincoln Elementary School: stored in a discretionary location of the classroom teacher.

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 district communication platforms 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 your student's school for assistance.

Why did the USD 508 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 the school office if their child has a medical need. Our school nurse and health services team will be reaching out to those they know may require a device for medical reasons.

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.

Can students use their phones when they are traveling for internships, field trips, off-site academic experiences, and/or extracurricular activities?

The law explicitly prohibits students from accessing or using personal devices during the school day while on campus. However, students will be granted access when off campus for school-related events and activities. Please contact your student's principal if you have questions or concerns about the access to or use of a personal electronic communication device in a specific off-campus situation.

What if a student leaves for an appointment or other excused absence?

We have procedures in place to release a student's phone from storage when they are checked out by a parent or guardian or are leaving the school for other excused absences. The device must be properly stored again if/when they return to school.

What if a student chooses not to follow expectations?

We know this is a big change, and we will work with students at school to create a smooth transition as much as possible. We will also explain the consequences of not following the new rules and policy. Violations will be handled individually, following our standard disciplinary policy and procedures.

What can families do to help?

Please encourage students to follow this new requirement and share some of the benefits that come from a less distracted learning environment. Working together, we hope to minimize additional disruptions to their school day that could come from non-compliance or disciplinary procedures. Parents, caregivers, and students are all encouraged to review the handbook policy about device use at school. This can be found in the 2026-2027 student handbook.

What are the possible benefits of a cell phone ban?

Our community is unique, but nationwide studies suggest that removing cell phones during school may benefit student learning by increasing classroom engagement and participation, while reducing cyberbullying and office discipline referrals. In our district, we have enjoyed benefits by reducing student cell phone use over the past year.

Where should I direct my questions about device use and the new rules?

Your child's school office will be available to answer your questions or help address any individual concerns you might have.

- Baxter High School, 620-856-3366
- Baxter Springs Middle School 620-856-3355
- Central Elementary School, 620-856-3311
- Lincoln Elementary School, 620-856-3322