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Gadsden City Board of Education
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Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy

Gadsden City Schools will follow the guidelines of the FOCUS Act (HB166) by putting a districtwide policy in place for personal electronic devices. The goal is to minimize distractions, protect instructional time, reduce academic dishonesty, and support a safe learning environment. This policy is based on the values of digital responsibility and maintaining a space where students can learn without distractions.

General Guidelines

Students may not use cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, gaming devices, AirPods, or other personal devices that have the capability of exchanging voice messaging or other data during instructional time. Devices must be turned off and stored in lockers, vehicles, or designated areas—not on the student. Device use before/after school, during PE, or at lunch is not allowed unless with permission.

Discipline

First Offense – The device will be taken, and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the device in person. The parent/guardian will sign a Cell Phone Policy Consequences Form.

Second Offense –The device will be taken, and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the device in person. The student will receive 2 days of ISS/Detention.

Third Offense—The device will be taken, and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the device in person. The student will receive 2 days OSS/Extended ISS.

Fourth Offense—The device will be taken, and a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the device in person. The student will receive 3 days OSS/Extended ISS. The parent/guardian will be referred to the District Attorney's Office.

Subsequent Offenses can result in a referral to the Alternative School.

Any student who refuses to give a cell phone/communication device in compliance with Gadsden City School's Cell Phone Policy, and in accordance with HB166, will be considered defiant and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the system handbook.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor their students' digital use and support the system's policy. Students are expected to follow the policy and understand the consequences of misuse. Devices are brought at the student's own risk, and the system is not responsible for loss, theft, or damage.

Authorized exceptions include the use of a device required by a student's IEP, 504 plan, or health plan.



Gadsden City Schools Internet Safety Policy

Adoption of Rules and Regulations

The Superintendent is authorized to develop, and present to the Board for approval, additional or more specific rules and regulations governing access to and the use of the district's technology resources. All rules and regulations must align with the requirements of the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Alabama's Freeing Our Classrooms of Unnecessary Screens for Safety Act to ensure safe, appropriate, and educationally focused technology use in all school settings. In compliance with The Focus Act (HB166) and Section 5.

Gadsden City Schools is committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and age-appropriate digital environment for all students and staff. This policy outlines the safeguards, responsibilities, and tools in place to promote responsible technology use.

Digital Safety and Access Control

Internet Filtering and Access

- Student access, as possible, is limited to educational, age-appropriate content.
- Securly is used to block or filter content that is obscene, harmful, or inappropriate.
- Social media use is prohibited.

Communication Safety

- Email and messaging tools are limited to approved platforms under staff supervision.
- Chat rooms and unauthorized communication tools are not allowed.
- Staff must ensure student safety in all digital interactions.

Prohibited Activities

Students may not:

- Access or share unlawfully obtained information (e.g., hacking).
- Use unauthorized websites, apps, or software that collect or misuse personal data.
- Engage in cyberbullying or inappropriate online behavior.
- Disclose or share personal information without permission.

Digital Citizenship and Education

- Students are taught appropriate online behavior, including safe interactions on social media and cyberbullying prevention.

Oversight and Enforcement

- School principals oversee policy enforcement.
- Violations result in disciplinary action per the Gadsden City Schools Code of Conduct.

Staff Compliance

- All certified staff must complete an annual anonymous survey to assess policy implementation and compliance.