LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN

TITLE: Supporting Student Mental Health and Learning by Implementing a Smartphone-Free School Day

NUMBER: BUL-162511.1

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ROUTING
All School Site Employees
Region Superintendents
Region Administrators of Operations
Region Operations Coordinators

POLICY: This is a new policy of Los Angeles Unified. The content of this policy is to address the use of cellular smartphones and other electronic devices by students on school grounds during instructional time.

MAJOR CHANGES: This bulletin replaces BUL-162511 Supporting Student Mental Health and Learning by Implementing a Smartphone-Free School Day, dated February 10, 2025, issued by the Division of School Operations. The content has been updated to outline procedures on the collection and distribution of Smartphone-Free School Day products in preparation for both, the opening of the school year and at the end of the school year, inform administrators to monitor and track approved exceptions, and provide guidance for charter schools occupying District facilities.

INTRODUCTION: This policy prohibits the use of smartphones, ancillary devices (e.g., smart watches, earbuds, wireless headphones, meta glasses, and smart glasses) and social media platforms Districtwide during the school day. Exceptions to this policy may apply based on the following circumstances: (1) when a licensed physician and surgeon determines that the possession or use of a smartphone is necessary for the health or well-being of the pupil; (2) when the possession or use of a smartphone is required in the pupil's individualized education program or Section 504 Plan; or (3) for English Learners at level 1 or 2 students to assist with translation. (4) Students in Foster Youth who utilize HopSkipDrive (HSD) for transportation; and (5) in the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger or if a family expresses a safety concern related to a potential or upcoming legal action.

Smartphones and electronic devices use will be allowed on school buses outside of school hours (e.g., to/from school) provided it does not interfere with the normal operation of the bus. Students are permitted to bring their smartphones and electronic devices to school, but they must be turned off and stored in their backpacks or District-allowed storage product (e.g., velcro pouch, magnetic pouch, classroom phone holder, or portable storage within a classroom setting) determined by their Local School Leadership Council (LSLC). Students will follow their school's policy in storing their smartphones and other electronic devices.

The use of smartphones is permitted **before** arriving on campus and **after** school dismissal as well as during extracurricular activities outside regular school hours.

BACKGROUND: Los Angeles Unified strives to minimize distractions, increase academic performance and ensure students' mental health and well-being. By limiting smartphone and electronic device use, the District hopes to reduce distractions and encourage student interactions with their peers.

GUIDELINES: The following guidelines apply:

Students are permitted to possess smartphones or electronic signaling devices on campus provided that any such device remains "off" and stored in their backpacks or designated storage product determined by the school's LSLC. The use of smartphones is permitted **before** arriving on campus and **after** school dismissal as well as during extracurricular activities outside regular school hours, this includes summer school and credit recovery, etc.

Students must follow school personnel instructions any time a request is made to cease the use of a smartphone or other electronic signaling device.

Students and parents/guardians are to be advised of this policy annually and are to be advised that the District is not responsible for the students' lost, damaged, or stolen smartphones or electronic devices.

I. POLICY ROLL-OUT

Any time a product selection changes, schools will need to engage stakeholders via their LSLC to discuss options for implementation, select the mode that is the best fit for their site, and approved by LSLC.

- The policy prohibits the use of smartphones and social media platforms by the use of an electronic device during the school day;
- This policy also applies to devices that provide similar functionality

to a smartphone, such as a "smart watch" and other ancillary devices (e.g., earbuds, wireless headphones, meta glasses, and smart glasses);

- In accordance with state guidelines around emergency access to smartphones, any policy approved by LSLC must allow students to maintain their smartphones turned off on their person, or be readily accessible by an approved District product (e.g., backpack, velcro pouch, magnetic pouch, classroom phone holder, or portable storage within a classroom setting);
- Students are only permitted to use smartphones on campus before and after the school day, if an exception does not apply;
- Schools that are already implementing a more stringent policy may continue with that policy, as long as it is consistent with the guidelines set forth in this policy and approved by their LSLC;
- Much like in the current policy, schools may also implement a more stringent policy (e.g., restricting the use during after-school programs) as long as it is consistent with District and state guidelines and approved by their school LSLC. If a school chooses to select a new product for implementation, it must be approved through their LSLC. The product selection must be aligned to an approved District product (e.g., backpack, velcro pouch, magnetic pouch, classroom phone holder, or portable storage) and any costs associated with the product selection will be incurred by the school;
- When ordering additional items of the school's selected product, please contact the Regional Buying Team from the Procurement Services Division.
- Costs associated with replacement items of the school's selected product will be incurred by the school.

II. CHARTER SCHOOL IMPLEMENTATION

All charter schools occupying District facilities will also need to implement a Smartphone-Free School Day policy that is consistent to this policy.

III. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

Support for students will be provided in alignment with the District's Discipline Foundation Policy and will utilize Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)/Restorative Practice (RP)supports, such as:

- Verbal reminders;
- Referral to a counselor/designee for a conversation;
- Contacting the parent/guardian to review the Phone-Free School Day Policy with their student;

- In-person meetings with the parent/guardian.

IV. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

The following will be available for students who may require additional support transitioning into the new policy:

- Support from school mental health providers and counseling staff;
- Engaging activities offered during nutrition and lunch;
- Student support groups and school clubs;
- Check-ins during advisory periods;
- Wellness Room with activities for engagement;
- Supports from a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)/Restorative Practice (RP).

V. EXCEPTIONS

An exception to this policy may be granted by the site administrator for purposes relating to:

- **Health-based needs**;
    a. If a student needs to have access to their personal smartphone or electronic device during the school day to manage a medical diagnosis, the parent/guardian will need to have the child's healthcare provider complete and return the Medical Exemption Request Form to the school for review. After receipt and review of the completed form, a determination will be made whether the exemption will be approved or denied.

- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/Section 504 Plan**;
    a. Exceptions to prohibiting smartphone use can be made if the student's IEP or 504 Plan outlines specific needs for the device to support the student's unique needs related to their disability and documents the exception for smartphone usage in the IEP or 504 Plan.

- **English Learners at Level 1 or 2 students to assist with translation;**
    a. If a student who is an English Learner (EL) at Level 1 or 2 needs access to their personal smartphone during the school day for translation purposes, the parent/guardian will need to

return the Request for Approval of Student Smartphone Accommodation for review and approval.

b. Schools can create a supportive learning environment that help students in EL programs integrate and succeed while minimizing potential distractions by setting guidelines.
c. Set clear rules and expectations by defining when and how students can use smartphones for translation during specific class activities and be restricted during exams or group discussions to maintain engagement. Establish reasonable time limits for translations to ensure it does not disrupt class time. Encourage responsible use to clarify that smartphones are tools for learning and students should focus on translating essential terms or phrases to avoid distractions. Provide alternative translation options such as bilingual dictionaries or classroom tablets or Chromebooks so students don't rely solely on smartphones. Monitor and provide support by having teachers observe how often and when students use smartphones for translation and provide assistance if needed, especially for those struggling with language barriers.

- **Student Support Programs;**
  a. Students in foster care who utilize HopSkipDrive (HSD) for transportation may require access to their smartphones during school hours to coordinate transportation. Students may notify school staff to facilitate timely access to their smartphones for the following permitted uses.
     - Smartphone use under this exception is strictly limited to:
       1. Driver Communication: Responding to HSD driver communications at dismissal;
       2. Caregiver Contact: Contacting caregivers to reschedule or cancel rides in accordance with HSD's policies, including adhering to the 90-minute cancellation window.

- **During an emergency or perceived threat of danger**, students will be able to access their smartphones when staff deem it safe for emergency use. If a student or parent requests that the student be allowed to use their smartphone due to a "perceived threat of danger" then the school will convene a threat assessment, and develop a safety plan, before allowing the use of the phone. In addition, if a family expresses a safety concern related to a

potential or upcoming legal action, the school will work to develop a plan for communication where access to the student's smartphone device may be granted by the school administrator.

- **Schools may also establish other exceptions that are relevant to their campus.** For example, a high school may allow students to use their smartphones when they are on a college campus as part of a dual enrollment agreement.

  Note: Extracurricular trips are considered instructional time, therefore, smartphones should be stored in the designated product unless the principal/teacher authorizes its use.

All exceptions must be approved by the school principal. The number of approved exceptions is to be tracked and monitored throughout the school year on the following platform as they become approved: https://principalportal.lausd.net/community/PhoneFreeExceptions.aspx. The link will also be made available on the Principal's Portal.

VI. STAFF RESPONSIBILITY WHEN TAKING POSSESSION OF A STUDENT'S SMARTPHONE OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

An employee who is acting within the scope of their work duties, in this case, enforcing the school's Smartphone-Free School Day policy, is not responsible for replacement if smartphones or electronic signaling devices are lost, stolen, or damaged. Should the parent/guardian or the student wish to file a claim related to a lost, stolen, or damaged smartphone or electronic signaling device, they would be advised to follow up with Risk Management to file a claim at (213) 241-3139.

Schools are to establish a procedure whereby staff can turn in confiscated personal property of students and the property is placed in a secured and locked location. A log noting an accurate description of the device should be maintained. Access should be limited to an administrator or designee.

Please return all confiscated cellphones that have not been returned to students the final week of school.

VII. COLLECTION OF SMARTPHONE PRODUCTS AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

Schools should develop a plan to collect cellphone products at the end of

the school year to reassign for the following school year and/or to be assigned for summer school. Velcro/magnetic pouches, storage containers, and pocket charts should be:

- Wiped or sprayed with an approved disinfectant for sanitization;
- Stored and secured for redistribution for the following school year and/or summer school.

VIII. DISTRIBUTION OF SMARTPHONE PRODUCTS IN PREPARATION FOR THE OPENING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

Schools should develop a plan to distribute smartphone products at the opening of the school year. For example, track products/items: take inventory and label products before they are distributed.

Schools that selected magnetic pouches should create a plan for classrooms that share an interior adjoining door so teachers can share an unlocking base/magnetizer.

RELATED RESOURCES: Supporting Student Mental Health and Learning by Ensuring a Phone-Free School Day (Res-035-23/24)

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Confiscated Devices Log – Optional
Attachment B – Request for Smartphone English Learner Accommodation
Attachment B1 – Request for Smartphone English Learner Accommodation – Spanish
Attachment C – Request for Smartphone Medical Exemption Accommodation
Attachment C1 – Request for Smartphone Medical Exemption Accommodation – Spanish
Attachment D – Request for Smartphone for Students in Out of Home Foster Care Accommodation
Attachment D1 – Request for Smartphone for Students in Out of Home Foster Care Accommodation – Spanish

ASSISTANCE: For additional information, please contact the Region Administrator of Operations or the Division of School Operations at (213) 241-5337.

Confiscated Devices Log – Optional

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Confiscated by (Name): _____ Time: _____

Given to (Name): _____ Position: _____

☐ Smartphone ☐ Smart Watch ☐ Smart Glasses ☐ Wireless Headphones

☐ Other: _____

Device Description/Serial Number: _____

Released by (Name): _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Received by: ☐ Student ☐ Parent (Name): _____

☐ Other (Name): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notes: _____

_____

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Confiscated by (Name): _____ Time: _____

Given to (Name): _____ Position: _____

☐ Smartphone ☐ Smart Watch ☐ Smart Glasses ☐ Wireless Headphones

☐ Other: _____

Device Description/Serial Number: _____

Released by (Name): _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Received by: ☐ Student ☐ Parent (Name): _____

☐ Other (Name): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Notes: _____

_____

Request for Smartphone Accommodation
English Learner Student

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Principal Name: _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ Grade: _____

REQUEST SMARTPHONE ACCOMMODATION: I am requesting permission for my child to use the cell phone for translation purposes. I agree with the following:

- The teacher(s) will implement a reasonable time limit (e.g., 1-2 minutes) for translations to ensure it doesn't disrupt class time,
- The teacher(s) will observe how often my child uses the cell phone for translation and provide assistance, if needed, especially when struggling with language barriers,
- The cell phone can be used during specific class activities or when encountering difficult vocabulary but will be restricted during exams or group discussions to maintain engagement.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)	Signature	Date

Principal Name	Signature	Date

Approval _____ Yes _____ No

(Please provide reason for denial.)

Solicitud de Approvación para el uso del Teléfono Inteligente
Estudiante de Inglés

Nombre de la escuela: _____ Fecha: _____

Nombre del director/directora: _____

Nombre del estudiante: _____ Fecha de Nacimiento: _____ Grado: _____

SOLICITUD DE APROBACIÓN PARA EL USO DEL TELÉFONO INTELIGENTE: Solicito permiso para que a mi hijo(a) se le permita usar el teléfono inteligente para fines de traducción. Yo estoy de acuerdo con lo siguiente:

- Los maestros implementarán un límite de tiempo razonable (por ejemplo, 1-2 minutos) para las traducciones para garantizar que no interrumpa el tiempo de clase;
- Los maestros observarán la frecuencia con la que mi hijo(a) usa el teléfono para traducir y brindarán asistencia si es necesario, especialmente cuando tenga dificultades con las barreras del idioma;
- El teléfono inteligente se puede usar durante actividades específicas de clase o cuando se encuentre vocabulario difícil, pero debe restringirse durante exámenes o discusiones grupales para mantener la participación.

Nombre del padre/tutor (imprimir)	Firma	Fecha

Nombre del director(a)	Firma	Fecha

Aprobación: _____ Si _____ No

(Proporcione el motivo del rechazo.)

Request for Medical Exemption
Student Smartphone/Electronic Device

In general, students are not permitted to possess/use a personal smartphone or electronic device powered on during the school day/bell schedule hours. If you feel that your child needs to have access to their personal cell phone or electronic device for their health or well-being, please complete and return this form to the school nurse for review.

1. Name of Student: _____ Gender: _____ D.O.B: _____
2. Name of School: _____ Grade: _____
3. Parent Contact Information

   Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____

   Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

   Street Address: _____

   City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
4. Medical Provider (California Licensed MD / DO / NP / PA)

   Medical Provider (providing care to the student for the condition for which services are requested) Name and Title: _____

   Medical Provider Address: _____

   Medical Provider Phone Number: _____

   Name of Supervising Physician (NP / PA): _____

Acknowledgment/Release: By my signature, I authorize the release and exchange of medical information between the medical provider(s) listed on this form or his/her designee and school personnel. My signature provides the medical provider(s) with the authorization necessary to disclose protected health information and records regarding said student. This authorization may be withdrawn at any time in writing and, if withdrawn, may affect the status of the request.

Please note: This form, including parental permission to contact the treating medical provider must be fully completed in order for the student to be considered for this exemption request.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

I/we (parent/guardian) request permission for a smartphone/electronic device exemption for _____ (student name). If approved, we understand that the smartphone/electronic device must be used by the student only as indicated by the medical provider below.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

I understand that completion of this application does not constitute or guarantee any exemption from Los Angeles Unified School District Smartphone Policy. I acknowledge that if my exemption is approved, I will be permitted to use my personal electronic device as indicated by the medical provider below.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

This section is to be completed by a medical provider (California Licensed MD / DO / NP / PA) providing medical care for the condition.

Explain exactly what activities you expect the student to need a smartphone/electronic device for during the school day that is necessary for the health or well-being of the student:

Medical Provider Name & License #: _____

Medical Provider Signature: _____ Date: _____

********** **SCHOOL PERSONNEL ONLY** **********

☐ Form submission received and acknowledged

School Nurse Signature: _____ Date: _____

Once acknowledged, please provide a copy of this form to the school principal, the student's teacher, and the parent/legal guardian. File the original in the student's health record card.

SOLICITUD DE EXENCIÓN MÉDICA
Teléfono Celular/Dispositivo Electrónico del Estudiante

En general, no se permite que los estudiantes posean o utilicen un teléfono inteligente o dispositivo electrónico personal encendido durante el horario escolar o el horario de clases. Si considera que su hijo necesita tener acceso a su teléfono inteligente o dispositivo electrónico personal para su salud o bienestar, complete y devuelva este formulario a la enfermera de la escuela para su revisión.

1. Nombre del estudiante: _____ Género: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____
2. Nombre de la escuela: _____ Grado: _____
3. Información de contacto de los padres _____

   Nombre del padre/tutor legal: _____

   Teléfono del hogar: _____ Teléfono del trabajo: _____ Teléfono móvil: _____

   Dirección del domicilio: _____

   Ciudad: _____ Estado: _____ Código postal: _____

4. **Proveedor médico (MD / DO / NP / PA con licencia en California)**

   Proveedor médico (que brinda atención al estudiante para la condición por la cual se solicitan los servicios) Nombre y título: _____

   Dirección del proveedor médico: _____

   Número de teléfono del proveedor médico: _____

   Nombre del médico supervisor (NP / PA): _____

Reconocimiento y Divulgación: Con mi firma, autorizo la divulgación e intercambio de información médica entre el proveedor(es) médico(s) que figuran en este formulario o su designado(s) y el personal de la escuela. Mi firma proporciona al proveedor(es) médico(s) la autorización necesaria para divulgar información médica protegida y los registros relacionados con dicho estudiante. Esta autorización puede ser revocada en cualquier momento por escrito y, si se revoca, puede afectar el estado de la solicitud.

Tenga en cuenta: Este formulario, incluido el permiso de los padres para comunicarse con el proveedor médico tratante, debe completarse en su totalidad para que el estudiante sea considerado para esta solicitud de exención.

Firma del padre: _____ Fecha: _____

Yo/nosotros (padre/tutor) solicito permiso para una exención para el uso del teléfono inteligente/ dispositivo electrónico _____ (nombre del estudiante). Si se aprueba, entendemos que el teléfono inteligente/dispositivo electrónico debe ser utilizado por el estudiante únicamente según lo indicado por el proveedor médico a continuación.

Firma del padre: _____ Fecha: _____

Entiendo que el completar esta solicitud no constituye ni garantiza ninguna exención a la política de teléfonos inteligentes del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Los Ángeles. Reconozco que, si se aprueba la exención, se me permitirá utilizar mi dispositivo electrónico personal según lo indicado por el proveedor médico a continuación.

Firma del estudiante: _____ Fecha: _____

Esta sección debe ser completada por un proveedor médico (MD / DO / NP / PA con licencia de California) que brinde atención médica para la condición:

Explique exactamente para qué actividades se espera que el estudiante necesite el teléfono celular/dispositivo electrónico durante el día escolar que sea necesario para la salud o el bienestar del estudiante:

Nombre del proveedor médico y número de licencia: _____

Firma del proveedor médico: _____ Fecha: _____

********** **PERSONAL ESCOLAR SOLAMENTE** **********

☐ Envío del formulario recibido y confirmado

Firma de la enfermera escolar: _____ Fecha: _____

Una vez que se haya recibido la confirmación, proporcione una copia de este formulario al director de la escuela, al maestro del estudiante y al padre/tutor legal. Guarde el original en la tarjeta de registro de salud del estudiante.

Request for Approval of Smartphone Accommodation
Students in Out of Home Foster Care

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Principal Name: _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____ Grade: _____

REQUEST FOR SMARTPHONE ACCOMMODATION: As a caregiver for a student in out-of-home foster care, I am requesting permission for them to access their personal smartphone or electronic device during the school day. This access will allow them to contact caregivers to cancel or reschedule rides with HopSkipDrive (HSD), per the cancellation policy. I agree with the following:

- The teacher(s) will allow a reasonable time frame (e.g., 1-2 minutes) for the student to access their smartphone or electronic device to contact a caregiver to cancel or reschedule a ride with HSD. The teacher(s) will determine a time to make the call that is the least disruptive to the class time.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print)	Signature	Date

Principal Name	Signature	Date

Approval _____ Yes _____ No

(Please provide reason for denial.)

ATTACHMENT D1

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN

Solicitud para la aprobación de la adaptación del use de teléfonos inteligentes
Estudiantes en Adopción Temporal Fuera del Hogar

Nombre de la escuela: _____ Fecha: _____
Nombre del Director: _____
Nombre del estudiante: _____ Fecha de nacimiento: _____ Grado: _____

SOLICITUD PARA LA ADAPTACIÓN DE TELÉFONOS INTELIGENTES: Como encargado del cuidado de un estudiante en adopción temporal fuera del hogar, estoy solicitando permiso para que mi estudiante pueda acceder a su teléfono inteligente o dispositivo electrónico personal durante el día escolar. Este acceso le permitirá contactar a los encargados de su cuidado para cancelar o reprogramar servicios de transporte con HopSkipDrive (HSD), según su política de cancelación. Estoy de acuerdo con lo siguiente:

- El/los maestro(s) permitirá(n) un plazo razonable (por ejemplo: 1-2 minutos) para que el estudiante acceda a su teléfono inteligente o dispositivo electrónico y se comunique con el encargado de su cuidado para cancelar o reprogramar el servicio de transporte con HopSkipDrive (HSD). El/los maestro(s) determinará(n) la hora de la llamada que menos perturbe el desarrollo de la clase.

Nombre del padre/tutor legal (en letra imprenta)	Firma	Fecha

Nombre del Director	Firma	Fecha

Aprobado: _____ Sí _____ No

(Por favor, indicar el motivo de la denegación).