

## **\*IMPORTANT UPDATE\*--Cell Phone Usage at GCA**



As you have probably seen in the news and from neighboring school districts, Texas has passed House Bill 1481 which prohibits student use of personal communication devices during the school day. The purpose of this law is to reduce student distractions, improve student engagement in the learning environment, and foster in-person interactions. This law applies to cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and all Bluetooth-enabled headphones or accessories.

Students may bring phones and personal electronic devices to school but they may not be used from 8:00 am till the end of the day dismissal at 3:30 pm. Cell phones, and all other personal electronic devices, must be powered off, stored in a backpack, and not used at any time (including during class, passing periods, lunch, or restroom breaks).

### **Expectations**

- **Device Usage:** Cell phones and other personal communication devices must be powered off during school hours. Placing a device on vibrate or using it for texting is prohibited, except before and after school.
- **Device Storage:** All personal communication devices must be placed in a backpack, bag, or purse. Carrying devices in pockets or in clothing is not permitted.
- **Headphones and Bluetooth Devices:** Smartwatches, headphones, earphones, and earbuds with Bluetooth capability are not allowed to be used or worn during the school day.
- **Restricted Areas:** Cell phones and personal communication devices may not be used in hallways, restrooms, cafeteria or any common areas throughout the school day.
- **Confiscation:** A staff member may confiscate a cell phone or personal communication device if it rings, vibrates, is used without permission, or if found in use on campus during school hours, except before and after school.
- **Emergency Drills:** During emergency drills, students may carry their backpack, bag, or purse, ensuring access to their cell phone for emergencies.
- **Emergency Situations:** In case of an emergency, campus administrators may give students permission to access their cell phones.

All staff members are required to adhere to the expectations of maintaining a student cell phone-free environment.

We understand that this is a change for students and families. The success of this initiative depends on a strong partnership between the school and our families. Your cooperation in reinforcing these expectations at home and supporting school staff in their effort is essential. Together, we can help ensure a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment where all students can thrive.

## Students may have cell phones on campus, but the policy is

***“Not Seen, Not Heard, Not Taken.”***

Students violating the cell phone policy will face disciplinary consequences of confiscation, fines, parental notification and parent pick-up of devices only. Exceptions may be made for medical, safety, or special education needs as approved by the Principal or Head of School only. Original documentation from a physician or diagnostician documenting medical or special education needs would be required.

**The following disciplinary action will be issued to students who are found using an unauthorized cell phone/electronic device or not properly storing the device, regardless of who owns the cell phone/electronic device.**

- **1st Offense**-Student will have the cell phone/electronic device confiscated, Fine \$15 (cash payment) or \$20 (credit card) and infraction logged in FACTS Disciplinary log. Payment Options: student/parent will have to pay in person or give verbal permission to administration and pay over the phone. Upon receipt of payment, the cell phone will be released to the owner at the end of the school day.
- **2nd Offense**- Device confiscated, Fine \$25 (cash payment) or \$30.00 (card payment). Payment Options: student/parent will have to pay in person or give verbal permission to administration and pay over the phone. Upon receipt of payment, the cell phone will be released to the owner at the end of the school day.
- **3rd Offense**- Device confiscated, Fine \$50 (cash payment) or \$55 (card payment). Devices will be required to be picked up by the parent/guardian only. A parent conference with the administration will be required.
- **4th Offense**- Device confiscated and will be required to be picked up by the parent/guardian only. The student's cell phone/electronic device will be prohibited on campus from that day forward. Students face the possibility of suspension.

Please review this information with students before the start of school.

Partnering Together for Success,

GCA Administration

