

HB 1481 Personal Communication Device Policy

Board Report | Chief of Schools Office | June 2026



LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Texas House Bill 1481 & HISD Board Policy FNCE

HB 1481 (Effective 2023-24)

Texas law prohibiting student use of personal communication devices on school property during the instructional day — from arrival through the end of the final period.

HISD Board Policy FNCE

Adopted August 27, 2025. Establishes local policy aligned with state law, including confiscation procedures, parent/guardian retrieval, and exceptions for IEP/504/physician needs.

What It Covers

Cell phones • Tablets • Smartwatches • Headphones • Any device capable of digital communication.

District Goal

Ensure full compliance with Texas HB 1481 across all HISD campuses — eliminating personal device use during the instructional day while keeping students in school and learning.

Year 1 Focus Area

- Establish districtwide enforcement expectations
- Standardize confiscation procedures
- Build campus-level tracking systems
- Train administrators and staff
- Create parent communication processes
- Ensure legal compliance with HB 1481
- Normalize instructional-day expectations

Device Confiscation Log Tracker

A standardized tool for campuses to document, track, and report device confiscations.

WHAT THE LOG CAPTURES	
Student Name & ID	Ensures accurate record-keeping tied to student file
Date & Time of Confiscation	Documents the exact moment the device was taken
Staff Member Name	Tracks which staff member confiscated the device
Device Type	Cell phone, smartwatch, tablet, or other device
Offense Number	1st through 5th — determines confiscation period
Parent Retrieval Date	When the device was picked up and by whom
Agreement Signed	Tracks acknowledgement and confiscation agreement status



Consequences Structure: Policy Refresh

Effective January 6, 2026 — Updated consequences ensure students do not miss school due to device confiscation.

Offense	Original Consequences (Pre-Jan 2026)	REFRESHED Consequences (Jan 2026+)
1st	Parents/guardians may retrieve the phone from the office after school, review, and sign the HISD Personal Communication Devices Policy as it relates to the law.	Device held until end of school day; parent/guardian retrieves after school and signs Parent/Student Acknowledgement .
2nd	Parents/guardians may pick up the phone in the office at the end of the following full school day.	Device held for 7 full school days; Parent/guardian must review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement .
3rd	Parents/guardians may pick up the phone in the office at the end of 2 full school days.	Device held for 14 school days; Parent/guardian must review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement .
4th	Further offenses will result in elevated formal disciplinary action, as outlined in the HISD Student Code of Conduct, which includes DAEP placement.	Device held for 30 school days; Parent/guardian must review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement .
5th	-	10-day DAEP Placement. If there is a personal communication device infraction at DAEP, the home campus will confiscate the device for the remainder of the semester.

Consequences Structure: Policy Refresh

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Offense	Confiscation Period	Parent/Guardian Action	Student Action / Support
1st Offense	Device held until the end of school day.	Parent/guardian retrieves device after school and signs the *Parent/Student Acknowledgement.	<p>At the discretion of campus: (these can be implemented throughout any offense but do not replace confiscation period.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Student(s) completes a Digital Responsibility Reflection Form. •Student(s) complete community service hours. •Student(s) can be removed from extra curricular activities. •Saturday School (if campus has the capacity) •PD Day Detention •DAEP (least preferred)
2nd Offense	7 full school days	Parent/guardian conference required review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement.	
3rd Offense	14 full school days	Parent/guardian conference required review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement.	
4th Offense	30 full school days.	Parent/guardian and student must attend a conference and review and sign the *Extended Device Confiscation Agreement.	
5th Offense	10-day DAEP Placement (if phone is confiscated at DAEP, device will be held until end of semester).		

*For all extended confiscations, parents or guardians must select one of the following options:
[\(Refer to the Parent Extended Device Confiscation Agreement\)](#)

1. The student's device will remain at home for the duration of the confiscation period. If a student brings a device during the confiscation period, it will be confiscated, extended to the next level of offense, and must remain on campus.
2. The student's device will remain on campus until the end of the confiscation period.

Communications & Resources

Multi-channel communication strategy to campuses, families, and staff

Campus Communications

- Principal briefings prior to initial and relaunch
- Campus toolkit with FAQ, confiscation envelope templates, forms and signage
- Staff training on confiscation procedure
- Device log submission instructions for campus admin

Family Communications

- District-wide parent notification letter (English, Spanish)
- Policy summary shared via ParentSquare

Online Resources

- HISD.org policy page with full FNCE regulation
- Student Code of Conduct

Device Confiscation Log: January – June 2026

District-wide confiscations tracked since policy refresh went into effect January 6, 2026.



Month	Total Confiscations	Total % of Students in District (165,538)	% 1st Offense	% Repeat(2-3)	% Repeat(4 or more)
Jan	2058	1.24%	93%	7%	0%
Feb	1992	1.20%	85%	12%	0%
Mar	1782	1.08%	70%	16%	1%
Apr	2184	1.32%	82%	23%	1%
May	1059	0.64%	38%	13%	1%

Key Takeaways and Looking Ahead

1

Policy Aligned with State Law

HISD's FNCE policy fully implements HB 1481, adopted August 2025. Instructional day prohibition ensures academically focused environment.

2

Refreshed Consequences Protect Instruction

3

District-Wide Communication

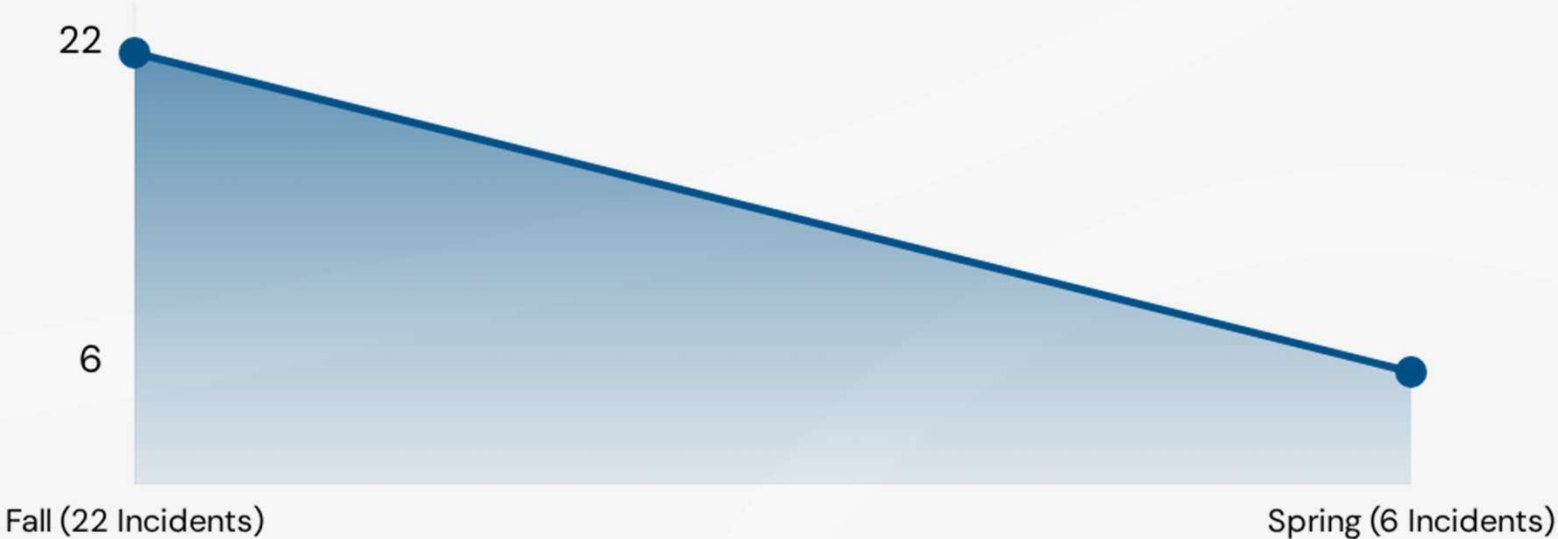
Comprehensive outreach reached campuses, principals, staff, and families via multiple channels.

4

Data-Driven Compliance Monitoring

Campus device logs track confiscation trends. District will report annually to the Board on implementation and compliance per FNCE(LOCAL).

Device Confiscation Log: Fall vs Spring DAEP Placements (CV21)



72.7%
Decrease in
Placements

The district witnessed a significant drop in DAEP placements for device-related infractions moving from Fall to Spring. This trend indicates that initial interventions are highly effective at curbing repeated policy violations throughout the academic year.

Board Policy: FNCE — Student Conduct: Personal Communication Devices/Electronic Devices

Adopted: 8/15/2025

- **Note** : For searches of personal communication devices or other personal electronic devices, see FNF.
- **Personal Communication Devices**
- A student is prohibited from possessing or using a personal communication device on school property during the instructional day, which for the purposes of this policy is defined as from when a student arrives at school until the end of the final period. A student does not violate this policy if a personal communication device is powered off and stored in his or her backpack. A student who violates this policy or any regulations shall be subject to discipline in accordance with FNCE(REGULATION) and the Board-adopted *Student Code of Conduct*.
- An authorized District employee shall confiscate a student's personal communication device that is possessed in violation of this policy or any applicable regulations.
- A student's confiscated communication device may be retrieved by the student's parent or guardian in accordance with FNCE(REGULATION). If a personal communication device is not retrieved, the District shall dispose of the device after providing the notice required by law.
- Exceptions
- A student shall be authorized to possess and use a personal communication device on school property during the school day only under the following circumstances:
- The student's possession and use is necessary for implementation of the student's individualized education program, a 504 plan, or a similar program or plan;
- The student's possession or use is required due to a documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician; or
- The student's possession or use is necessary to comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of the District or campus safety protocols.
- Implementation
- The Superintendent shall develop regulations to implement this policy.
- Compliance
- Annually, the Superintendent shall report to the Board on the implementation and compliance of this policy.