



August, 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

For the 2026 - 2027 academic year, Anawakalmekak has updated and will be enforcing our Cellphone/Smartphone Use Policy following the guidance of the [Phone Free School Act \(AB3216\)](#). The policy details the student use of cellphones, smartphones, and other similar internet-connected or handheld devices on-campus—including during regular school hours and after school activities—and school sponsor events such as field trips. The goal of this policy is to foster a positive learning environment and allow our students to be more engaged in their learning.

Research shows the significant negative impact of cell phone use on mental health. Students' connection to one another and to the instructional staff impacts their ability to learn. Research and experience have made clear that student access to cell phones distracts from the learning environment and creates a significant barrier to the interactions and connections crucial to rich, relationship-based learning.

The overarching goals are: (i) to promote focus on academic, enrichment, and in-person social connections while at school, and (ii) to promote student safety by limiting exposure to unmonitored internet access, decreasing risks posed by unmonitored social media access, and reducing the potential for unconsented photography/videography/audio recording. To support these goals:

1. During regular school hours on-campus or after-school activities *and/or* during field trips:
 - a. **STUDENT CELLPHONE/SMARTPHONE USE IS NOT PERMITTED.**
Any such devices, or any similar electronic device with communication capabilities and/or internet functionality, ***MUST be turned off and stored in the owner's backpack and powered off.*** Students are not permitted to keep such devices in their pockets/clothing, on or in their desks, or anywhere else within visible easy reach. The device should be fully inside their backpack and not visible.
 - b. Phones are ***NEVER*** allowed in bathrooms, hallways, lunch areas, or in PE class. Violation of this rule will result in immediate confiscation in accordance with section 4 below.



- c. Earbuds, headphones, and other personal audio devices may **ONLY** be used in the classroom for academic purposes, and **ONLY** with permission from the supervising teacher. All other earbuds, headphones, and other personal audio devices usage (including, but not limited to use in the hallways, bathrooms, lunch areas, Physical Education class or field trips) is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**.
 - d. All other personal electronic devices with communication capabilities and/or internet functionality—including but not limited to smartwatches, tablets, e-readers, wireless earbuds, handheld gaming devices, and smart glasses—are subject to the same requirement as cellphones/smartphones. These devices may not be used at any time for calls, messaging, notifications, email, social media, and/or web browsing.
 - e. Tablets or laptops for academic purposes are only allowed when specifically **PERMITTED by a teacher, field trip facilitator, afterschool program staff, or other designated educational staff**. In such cases, using the device for activities not directly related to the assignment (e.g., general web browsing, watching videos, playing games, etc.) is **NOT PERMITTED**.
 - f. Use of tablets or laptops for other purposes is only allowed under the direct permission and supervision of an instructor (i.e., a teacher or an activity facilitator) as part of an established instructional activity.
2. Use of devices are allowed under the following limited circumstances and for the following limited purposes:
- a. After a regular school day has ended, a cellphone/smartphone may be used **SOLELY** for the purpose of coordinating pickup with a caregiver. To use a cellphone/smartphone for this purpose, a student must:
 - (i). Go to the Main Office when school personnel are present.
 - (ii). Retrieve their device from their backpack and power it **ONLY** when in the Main Office.
 - (iii). Complete the call/message coordinating pickup.
 - (iv). Power the device off and store the device when coordination is complete.
 - (v). Adhere to any guidance from school personnel regarding pausing or stopping use at any time during the process.



- b. Similarly, when a field trip or on-campus afterschool activity is ending, a cellphone/smartphone may be used solely for the purpose of coordinating pickup with a parent/guardian. To use a cell/smartphone for this purpose, a student must:
 - (i). Ask the field trip facilitator or afterschool instructor for permission to retrieve their device from their backpack and power it on.
 - (ii). Use the device in an area designated by their instructor and where the instructor can see the student while using the cellphone/smartphone.
 - (iii). Complete the call/message coordinating pickup.
 - (iv). Power the device off and store the device when coordination is complete.
 - (v). Adhere to any guidance from the instructor regarding pausing or stopping use at any time during the process.
 - c. A student may use a device for translation purposes with the express permission of the supervising instructor or staff member. Permission may be granted for the duration of a specific task or activity and does not extend to other device use.
 - d. Pupils are not prohibited from possessing or using a smartphone in the case of an emergency, or in response to a reasonable belief of a threat or danger.
3. Use of cellphones/smartphones, other internet-connected devices, or other devices of any kind for photography, videography, or audio recording is **NOT PERMITTED** at any time.
4. Violation of this policy may result in confiscation of a device until a parent/guardian can retrieve it.
- a. Future use of such a device may be prohibited for any violation. Upon discovery of any violation of this policy, the Anawakalmekak staff member who discovered the violation will take steps to ensure that the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the violating student are informed of the violation.
 - b. Students who violate the policy multiple times shall lose the privilege to use cellphone/smartphones for at least one academic week (5 school days), and for as much time as deemed appropriate based upon the discretion of the student's teacher, the principal, or admin designee. Additional discipline may also result for any breach of applicable school rules, at the discretion of the appropriate instructor, staff, or administrator.



5. Notwithstanding any of the above-mentioned potential disciplinary actions, use of cellphones/smartphones shall not be prohibited in the following situations:
 - a. In the case of an emergency or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
 - b. When a teacher or administrator of the school district, county office of education, or charter school grants permission to a pupil to possess or use a smartphone, subject to any reasonable limitation imposed by that teacher or administrator.
 - c. 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.
 - d. When the possession or use of a smartphone is required in a pupil's individualized education program.
6. **IF a student does not meet this expectation, what happens?** Expectations around cell phone use at school will be reinforced in partnership with the parent/guardian.
 - **1st Offense:** The student will receive a verbal warning.
 - **2nd Offense:** The device will be confiscated and sent to the front office. The student may pick it up at the end of the school day.
 - **3rd Offense:** The device will be confiscated and sent to the office. **A parent/ guardian will be required to come to the office to pick it up.**
 - **4th Offense:** A formal intervention plan will be created in partnership with the family. The student will be required to either store their phone in the office every morning or leave it at home.
 - **5th Offense:** The device will be confiscated and locked away by the school administration. **Parents/guardians will only be permitted to retrieve the device during the final week of the school year.**
7. An Anawakalmekak staff member who is acting within the scope of their work duties, in this case, enforcing this policy, are **NOT** responsible for replacement if devices are lost, stolen, or damaged.
8. If parents/guardians need to reach their child during the school day for an emergency, please call the Main Office. We will ensure students receive messages in a timely manner. For all other non-emergency messages, students may check their phones after school as they leave the building.

DISCLAIMER ON ACCOMMODATIONS AND MEDICAL NEEDS:



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Nothing in this policy limits, restricts, or supersedes any device use that is required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, or that is documented as necessary for a student's health or medical care, such as continuous glucose monitoring. Where such a need is documented, the student's plan governs, and staff will support the student's use of the device as specified.

Please review this letter with your child prior to the start of school. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment for your child. If you have any questions regarding our cell phone guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact the counseling team.

Sincerely,
Anawakalmekak Leadership