

Lotus School for Excellence

Cell Phone & Personal Communication Device Policy

Effective Date: First day of Second Semester,

Approved By: Governing Board / Executive Director

Applies To: All students (grades K–12) during the school day and during school-sponsored activities on campus

1. Purpose

Lotus School for Excellence is committed to a safe, focused, and respectful learning environment. Unrestricted cell phone use during school hours can distract from instruction, reduce engagement, and create social and safety concerns.

This policy limits student cell phone and personal communication device use during school hours and establishes clear procedures for storage, exceptions, and consequences.

2. Definitions

For this policy, **cell phones/personal communication devices** include any personal student device that can:

- send or receive calls or voicemails,
- send or receive text messages,
- take or share photos or videos, or
- access the internet or social media.

Examples include **cell phones, smartphones, iPods, smartwatches, or similar personal media players, and any comparable device used to send or receive calls, messages, images, videos, or internet content.**

Personal **headphones/earbuds** used with these devices are also subject to this policy and must follow the same storage and use expectations.

3. Core Expectation: “Silenced and Away All Day”

To support learning and reduce distractions, students must keep phones/personal communication devices **silenced (no sound and no vibration)** and stored in their assigned locker during the school day.

4. Morning Arrival Procedure

- Upon arrival to campus, students must go directly to their locker.
- Devices must be **silenced** (no sound and no vibration).
- Devices must be placed **inside the student’s individually assigned locker.**

- Personal headphones/earbuds used with phones or personal devices must also be stored in the locker.
- Devices remain in lockers until dismissal, unless an approved exception applies.

Students may not carry phones/personal communication devices on their person during class time unless specifically authorized.

5. During the School Day

Phones/personal communication devices:

- **may not be used from the beginning of 1st period until dismissal**, and
- **must remain in lockers** during this time.

Phones/personal communication devices may not be used or visible in:

- classrooms,
- hallways,
- restrooms,
- cafeteria,
- recess/outdoor areas,
- assemblies, meetings, or school events held during school hours.

Personal headphones/earbuds may not be worn or used during the school day unless explicitly authorized for instructional purposes with school-approved devices.

6. Exceptions (Limited and Approved Only)

Approved exceptions may be granted for:

- **Medical or documented safety needs** verified by appropriate paperwork.
- **IEP/504 accommodations** requiring device access.
- **Instructional use** only when a teacher gives explicit, pre-approved permission for a specific activity and timeframe.
- **Emergency family communication** routed through the Front Office.

Students with approved exceptions must follow a written plan describing **when, where, and how** the device may be used.

7. Communication with Families

To protect instructional time and student safety:

- Families should contact students **through the Front Office** during school hours.

- School staff will deliver urgent messages promptly.
- Students may not text/call family directly during the school day unless authorized under an exception.
- **Students may contact parents/guardians using the main office phone with permission from LSE teachers, support staff, or administrators.**

8. Enforcement Procedures

If a student is found using or possessing a phone/device outside allowed times:

Staff Confiscation

- Staff will request the device immediately.
- **The device will be delivered to the Dean of Students office.**

Parent/Guardian Notification

- The Front Office will notify the parent/guardian.

Device Return

- Return depends on the offense level (see below).

9. Consequences (Progressive Discipline)

Violations will be addressed consistently and may also include classroom/behavior consequences.

First Offense

- Device confiscated.
- Student retrieves device at end of day.
- Parent/guardian notified.

Second Offense

- Device confiscated.
- Parent/guardian must pick it up.
- Student conference with administrator.

Third Offense

- Device confiscated.
- Parent/guardian must pick it up.
- Detention or behavior plan may be assigned.

Repeated/Severe Offenses

- Additional discipline per Student Code of Conduct or school discipline committee decision.

Severe offenses include:

- recording/photographing others without permission,
- online posting of school content without authorization,
- bullying, harassment, cheating, or privacy violations,
- refusal to surrender a device,
- use during tests/assessments.

10. Lost, Stolen, or Damaged Devices

- Students bring devices to school **at their own risk**.
- LSE is **not responsible** for lost, stolen, or damaged personal devices, including those stored in lockers.
- Students are expected to secure lockers appropriately.

11. Staff Responsibilities

All staff will:

- Enforce the policy consistently and respectfully,
- Report repeated violations to the administration.

12. Policy Start Announcement

Announcement to Students & Families:

This policy will go into effect on the **first day of Second Semester**. Beginning that day, all students will be required to place phones/personal communication devices - and any personal headphones or earbuds used with them - in their assigned lockers upon arrival each morning and keep them stored (silenced) for the full school day, until they leave the school building.