

Kimberly School District #414
REGULAR BOARD MEETING FY26
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025
12B7 CELL PHONE POLICIES

This agenda item has been requested to allow the board to consider the district’s approach to student cell phone use, including the possibility of adopting a stricter “no cell phone” policy. The increasing presence of personal devices in schools has raised concerns regarding student focus, mental health, and social-emotional development.

Research indicates that access to cell phones and social media at an early age can contribute to increased anxiety, distraction, and disrupted sleep. Jonathan Haidt, in *The Anxious Generation*, suggests that children generally should not have their own smartphones until approximately age 14, and should delay social media use until around age 16. The board may consider whether a stricter district-wide approach aligns with these recommendations and supports academic and social-emotional outcomes.

Current School Policies:

- **Kimberly Elementary School (KES, Grades K–5):**
 - Phones and smartwatches must remain turned off and stored during the school day.
 - Violations: 1st offense – reminder; 2nd offense – device taken to office and parents contacted; continued offenses may require daily turn-in.
 - School is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.
- **Stricker Elementary School (SES, Grades K–5):**
 - Phones/smartwatches may not be used during instructional time unless approved by a teacher; prohibited during lunch, recess, bathrooms, and emergency drills.
 - Violations result in teacher confiscation, office referral, and possible parent contact.
 - Photographing or videoing others without permission is prohibited.
- **Kimberly Middle School (KMS, Grades 6–8):**
 - KMS is a cell phone–free zone. Phones, smartwatches, and Bluetooth headphones may not be used at any time during the school day.
 - Storage: backpack, locker, or designated location; phones may not be kept on desks, in pockets, or under legs.
 - Emergency use: office phone.
 - Violations:
 - 1st offense: phone turned into office, returned at end of day
 - 2nd offense: phone turned in, lunch detention, parent pickup
 - Continued offenses: student placed on a cell phone contract requiring daily

turn-in

- Taking photos/videos of others requires permission; gaming consoles and controllers follow the same protocol.
- **Kimberly High School (KHS, Grades 9–12):**
 - Phones must remain off or in backpacks during class, except for the last five minutes for instructional purposes.
 - Violations: 1st offense – office lockup; 2nd offense – 30-minute detention; 3rd offense – 60-minute detention; 4th offense – parent pickup; continued violations may result in behavioral contracts or phone bans.
 - Taking photos/videos of others requires permission; school is not responsible for lost or damaged devices.

This explanation is provided to inform the board and the public of current practices and considerations as the board reviews potential modifications to student cell phone use. Principals will be available during the meeting to answer any questions regarding current policy and implementation.