
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State is
2 committed to maintaining high levels of education by ensuring
3 that public schools provide a safe, secure, and effective
4 learning environment for students. However, the increased
5 presence and use of telecommunication devices during the school
6 day have become a significant distraction for students, leading
7 to reduced attention and diminished classroom engagement.

8 The legislature further finds that numerous states have
9 enacted statewide policies that restrict or prohibit student use
10 of cell phones and similar devices during the school day.
11 Certain states, including Louisiana, have adopted policies
12 limiting student cell phone use during the instructional day,
13 with exceptions for educational or authorized purposes, and that
14 early reports from school officials in those states indicate
15 improvements in student focus, attendance, and academic
16 performance following implementation. National surveys of
17 public school leaders and teachers indicate that a majority



1 report negative impacts from student cell phone use on mental
2 health, attention spans, and educational outcomes.

3 The purpose of this Act is to establish a uniform,
4 statewide policy restricting student use of telecommunication
5 devices during the instructional day in public schools in order
6 to strengthen learning environments, support student mental and
7 emotional well-being, and improve academic outcomes for students
8 throughout Hawaii.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended by adding a new section to part II, subpart C, to be
11 appropriately designated and to read as follows:

12 "§302A- Telecommunication devices; prohibited. (a)
13 Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, except as provided in
14 subsection (b), no student in a public school shall use a
15 telecommunication device on school grounds during the
16 instructional day.

17 (b) A telecommunication device may be used on school
18 grounds during the instructional day:

19 (1) With the direct permission of a teacher or school
20 administrator for instructional or educational
21 purposes;



1 (2) When the device is required for documented medical
2 purposes, including monitoring or managing a medical
3 condition; or

4 (3) During a schoolwide emergency, when use of a
5 telecommunication device is necessary to protect the
6 health or safety of students or staff.

7 (c) A student who violates this section within the same
8 school year shall be subject to the following:

9 (1) Immediate confiscation of the telecommunication device
10 by a teacher or administrator; and

11 (2) Additional disciplinary action for subsequent
12 violations.

13 (d) A confiscated telecommunication device shall be stored
14 by a teacher or school administrator in a secure location.
15 Storage operations and policies shall be determined by each
16 school.

17 (e) A confiscated telecommunication device shall be
18 released only to the student's legal parent or guardian. A
19 legal parent or guardian shall have no more than three months
20 from the date of confiscation to retrieve the telecommunication
21 device. During that three-month period, the school shall



1 provide the legal parent or guardian with at least three
2 notifications regarding retrieval of the telecommunication
3 device. A telecommunication device that is not retrieved within
4 three months from the date of confiscation shall be deemed
5 forfeited to the school and may be disposed of or repurposed.

6 (f) No school, teacher, or school administrator shall be
7 liable for the loss, damage, or destruction of a confiscated
8 telecommunication device; provided that reasonable steps shall
9 be taken to secure the device until it is retrieved by the
10 student's legal parent or guardian.

11 (g) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
12 necessary for the purposes of this section.

13 (h) For purposes of this section:

14 "Instructional day" means the entire school day, including
15 instructional periods, lunch, recess, and transitions between
16 classes.

17 "Telecommunication device" means any electronic device
18 capable of connecting to the Internet or a cellular network and
19 transmitting or receiving communications, including but not
20 limited to cellular phones, smart phones, smart watches,
21 tablets, and other similar devices."

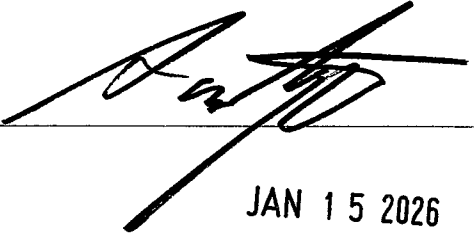


1 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

2 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:


JAN 15 2026



H.B. NO. 1559

Report Title:

Department of Education; Telecommunication Devices; Prohibited

Description:

Prohibits a student from using a telecommunication device on school grounds during the instructional day, with certain exceptions. Requires a confiscated telecommunication device to be released only to the student's legal parent or guardian, who then has three months to retrieve the device or subject the device to forfeiture.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

