


**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO**  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

May 18, 2026

TO: Principals (All)

FROM: Teri Ushijima, Ed.D.   
Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: Implementation Plan for Board of Education Policy 301-11, Cell Phone Use by Students in Schools

Following the Board of Education's adoption of Policy 301-11 on February 12, 2026, the Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) has finalized the statewide Implementation Plan. This plan establishes the framework for creating cell phone-free learning environments across all campuses beginning with the 2026-2027 school year.

The transition focuses on key objectives, including improving academic focus by reducing cognitive distractions, supporting student mental health, fostering real-world social development, and enhancing campus safety. To ensure a successful rollout, the following action items are provided for school-level leadership:

**Review Implementation Plan and Support Resources**

- **Implementation Plan for Policy 301-11:** A comprehensive document outlining statewide minimum guidelines, mandatory exceptions, and reporting requirements. The implementation plan can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/hawaiicellphonepolicyplan>.
- **Administrative & Training Toolkit:** A centralized digital resource containing instructional videos, presentation decks, FAQ sheets, and templates to assist in staff training and community orientation. The toolkit can be accessed at: <https://bit.ly/cellphonepolicytoolkit>.

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While the Department provides these baseline implementation and communication tools, individual schools must ensure that campus-specific procedures, including specific storage logistics and, for high schools, boundaries for non-instructional use, are fully finalized and ready for implementation by the first day of the 2026-2027 school year.

### **Distribute Superintendent Parent Notification Letter**

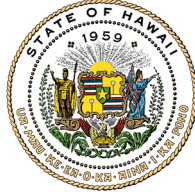
Schools are encouraged to distribute the attached letter to parents from Superintendent Keith T. Hayashi regarding the upcoming policy changes before the conclusion of the current school year. Schools that are communicating electronically with families may send the following: *“Aloha Parents, sharing this important letter from Superintendent Keith T. Hayashi that can be accessed here: [go.hidoe.us/Cell-Phone-Policy-Letter](https://go.hidoe.us/Cell-Phone-Policy-Letter).”* Templates for beginning of the school parent letters are in the toolkit.

The Department values the dedicated leadership of principals and complex area staff as we work together to foster a more focused and healthy learning environment for all of Hawai'i's students.

Should you have any questions, please contact Charles Souza, Administrator, Digital Design Team, at (808) 784-6483 or via email at [charles.souza@k12.hi.us](mailto:charles.souza@k12.hi.us).

TU:cs  
Attachment

c: Superintendent  
Deputy Superintendents  
Assistant Superintendents  
Complex Area Superintendents



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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

May 18, 2026

Aloha Parents and Guardians,

Supporting safe, focused and engaging learning environments for our students is always a top priority. As cell phone use has become more common among students, schools are seeing the challenges that constant digital access can create during the school day. We are taking steps to help students stay focused in class and strengthen in-person connections at school.

Beginning with the first day of instruction for the 2026-27 school year, all Hawai'i State Department of Education schools will implement a new statewide cell phone policy adopted by the Hawai'i State Board of Education (Board). This means:

- **For elementary and middle/intermediate schools:** Cell phones must remain off and away during the entire school day — from the first bell to the last bell. Phones should be stored in student backpacks or designated classroom storage areas.
- **For high schools:** Cell phones must remain off and away during instructional time. High school administrators may allow use during non-instructional periods, such as lunch and passing periods. During class time, phones should be stored in backpacks or designated classroom storage areas.

As outlined in the Board policy, exceptions will be made for documented medical or educational needs, reporting emergencies, perceived safety threats, or instructional purposes approved by a teacher or administrator.

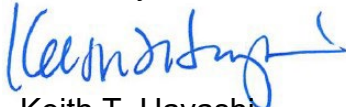
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Parents and guardians may continue to contact the school's main office for urgent messages or family matters, and staff will ensure important information is relayed to students.

We ask for your partnership in discussing these upcoming changes with your child and supporting responsible technology habits that aim to improve academic focus and support student well-being.

Additional school-specific guidance and procedures relating to this change will be shared prior to the start of the new school year. Mahalo for your support and understanding.

Sincerely,



Keith T. Hayashi  
Superintendent

KTH:kym