

HOUSE BILL 525

F1
HB 630/25 – W&M

6lr0765
CF 6lr2736

By: **Delegates Boafo, Kaufman, Moreno, Schindler, Solomon, and Taylor**

Introduced and read first time: January 27, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **County Boards of Education – Student Electronic Communication Device Use**
3 **Policy – Establishment**
4 **(Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act)**

5 FOR the purpose of requiring each county board of education to develop and implement,
6 not later than a certain school year, a policy limiting the use of an electronic
7 communication device by a student during the school day except under certain
8 circumstances; and generally relating to county boards of education and a student
9 electronic communication device use policy.

10 BY adding to
11 Article – Education
12 Section 7–137
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
16 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article – Education**

18 **7–137.**

19 **(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS**
20 **INDICATED.**

21 **(2) “ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY” MEANS ANY STRUCTURED OR**
22 **UNSTRUCTURED LEARNING EXPERIENCE THAT OCCURS FROM WHEN THE FIRST**
23 **BELL RINGS AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY UNTIL THE DISMISSAL BELL RINGS**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY, INCLUDING INSTRUCTIONAL PERIODS, LUNCH,
2 RECESS, PASSING PERIODS, AND TRANSITIONAL PERIODS.

3 (3) (I) "ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE" MEANS ANY
4 PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICE CARRIED OR TRANSPORTED BY A STUDENT TO
5 RECEIVE, SEND, OR RECORD VOICE, IMAGE, OR TEXT CONTENT, INCLUDING CELL
6 PHONES, TABLETS, LAPTOPS, SMART WATCHES, WIRELESS EARBUDS OR
7 HEADPHONES, GEOLOCATION DEVICES, AND ANY OTHER DEVICE WITH
8 COMMUNICATION FUNCTIONS.

9 (II) "ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE" DOES NOT
10 INCLUDE AN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE PROVIDED BY A COUNTY BOARD
11 FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES.

12 (4) "STORE" MEANS TO SECURE IN A MANNER DETERMINED BY THE
13 COUNTY BOARD TO ENSURE THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE IS NOT
14 CARRIED ON THE STUDENT'S PERSON DURING THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY.

15 (B) NOT LATER THAN THE 2027-2028 SCHOOL YEAR, EACH COUNTY BOARD
16 SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A POLICY TO LIMIT THE USE OF ELECTRONIC
17 COMMUNICATION DEVICES BY STUDENTS DURING THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY.

18 (C) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, THE
19 POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL:

20 (1) PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM USING AN ELECTRONIC
21 COMMUNICATION DEVICE DURING THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY;

22 (2) REQUIRE A STUDENT TO STORE THE STUDENT'S ELECTRONIC
23 COMMUNICATION DEVICE DURING THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY;

24 (3) PROHIBIT A STUDENT FROM USING THE SOCIAL MEDIA
25 APPLICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES DETERMINED BY THE COUNTY BOARD
26 DURING THE ACADEMIC SCHOOL DAY; AND

27 (4) REQUIRE ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF A
28 PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES
29 WHEN A SCHOOL-ISSUED ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE IS UNAVAILABLE.

30 (D) THE POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION MAY NOT PROHIBIT A
31 STUDENT FROM USING AN ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE:

1 **(1) FOR ANY PURPOSE DOCUMENTED IN THE STUDENT’S**
2 **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM OR 504 PLAN;**

3 **(2) TO MONITOR OR ADDRESS A STUDENT’S DOCUMENTED HEALTH**
4 **ISSUE;**

5 **(3) DURING AN EMERGENCY EVENT, IF EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZED BY**
6 **AN ADMINISTRATOR;**

7 **(4) WHEN DIRECTED BY AN ADMINISTRATOR FOR EDUCATIONAL**
8 **PURPOSES;**

9 **(5) TO ACCESS LANGUAGE TRANSLATION TOOLS TO ENSURE**
10 **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR MULTILINGUAL STUDENTS WHEN SCHOOL-ISSUED**
11 **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE OR SUFFICIENT FOR**
12 **THIS PURPOSE; OR**

13 **(6) FOR THE PURPOSE OF MEETING CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES,**
14 **AS APPROVED BY A PRINCIPAL.**

15 **(E) EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL:**

16 **(1) ENGAGE PARENTS, STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND COMMUNITY**
17 **STAKEHOLDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND REVISION OF THE POLICY; AND**

18 **(2) PUBLISH AND MAKE THE POLICY AVAILABLE IN MULTIPLE**
19 **LANGUAGES IN STUDENT HANDBOOKS, ON THE SCHOOL’S AND COUNTY BOARD’S**
20 **WEBSITES, AND AT SCHOOL EVENTS.**

21 **(F) (1) A POLICY DEVELOPED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE**
22 **APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE POLICY.**

23 **(2) THE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ADOPTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1)**
24 **OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL BE TIERED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES ENFORCED BY AN**
25 **ADMINISTRATOR.**

26 **(3) A DISCIPLINARY MEASURE ADOPTED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF**
27 **THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT INCLUDE SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION SOLELY FOR A**
28 **VIOLATION OF THE POLICY.**

29 **(G) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2027, AND EACH SEPTEMBER 1 UNTIL**
30 **SEPTEMBER 1, 2032, EACH COUNTY BOARD SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE**

1 **DEPARTMENT ON THE IMPACTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ELECTRONIC**
2 **COMMUNICATION DEVICE POLICY IN THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM, INCLUDING:**

3 **(1) A COPY OF THE CURRENT ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE**
4 **POLICY THAT DESCRIBES:**

5 **(I) STORAGE AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS;**

6 **(II) GRADE-LEVEL DIFFERENTIATION;**

7 **(III) INSTRUCTIONAL USE PROTOCOLS; AND**

8 **(IV) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLANS;**

9 **(2) DOCUMENTATION OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT;**

10 **(3) COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT DATA, INCLUDING:**

11 **(I) RELATED DISCIPLINARY REFERRALS, DISAGGREGATED BY**
12 **STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC SUBGROUPS; AND**

13 **(II) THE USE OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS A DISCIPLINARY**
14 **MEASURE, IF USED;**

15 **(4) DESCRIPTION OF THE IMPACTS ON THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT,**
16 **IF ANY, INCLUDING SURVEY DATA FROM STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS ON**
17 **FOCUS, WELL-BEING, AND SATISFACTION FOLLOWING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION;**

18 **(5) EQUITY AND ACCOMMODATION DATA, INCLUDING THE NUMBER**
19 **AND TYPE OF EXEMPTIONS TO THE POLICY GRANTED BY A SCHOOL; AND**

20 **(6) ANTICIPATED POLICY REVISIONS FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL**
21 **YEAR, IF ANY.**

22 **(H) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2028, AND EACH JULY 1 UNTIL JULY 1, 2033,**
23 **THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PUBLISH ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE A REPORT**
24 **THAT COMPILES AND SUMMARIZES THE REPORTS OF THE COUNTY BOARDS ON THE**
25 **IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE POLICIES**
26 **UNDER SUBSECTION (G) OF THIS SECTION, INCLUDING:**

27 **(1) THE DATA SUBMITTED BY THE COUNTY BOARDS TO THE**
28 **DEPARTMENT;**

1 **(2) ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES; AND**

2 **(3) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND MODEL POLICIES.**

3 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
4 1, 2026.