

## **SPS Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use Policy**

The Stamford Public Schools recognize that many students at all grade levels possess and bring cell phones and other electronic devices to school. The purpose of the Stamford Board of Education Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use Policy is to ensure that cell phones and other electronic devices support classroom instruction, enrich student learning, and promote the safety of students, school staff, and school property. The use of cell phones and other electronic devices will be regulated by building administration and by the classroom teacher.

The Board considers allowing students to bring such devices to school to be a privilege and not a right. The Board reserves the right to revoke this privilege if a student fails to adhere to Board policies and associated rules and regulations. The following are guidelines and/or the Stamford Board of Education's acceptable use and regulations for electronic devices.

***The Stamford Public School system assumes no liability for personal electronic devices that are lost, broken, or stolen, or damaged in any manner.***

Policy Adopted: Aug 29, 2022

### **Cell Phone and Electronic Device Use Regulations**

For the purpose of this policy and regulation, an electronic device is defined as any two-way wireless communication device or any other device capable of storing, playing, transmitting, or receiving images, data, text, video, audio files, and/or games, including, but not limited to, tablets, smart watches, cell phones, smart phones, e-readers, headphones, handheld video game devices, etc., and similar devices (hereinafter collectively referred to as a "Device" or "Devices").

#### **Use**

Any improper or unauthorized use of Devices while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation, while at school-sponsored events or at such times not authorized by the principal or designee is prohibited.

**Timing**

Devices are permitted on school grounds and at school-sponsored events, but may not be used, heard, or displayed during the school day, or during a school sponsored event, unless specifically approved pursuant to this regulation, by the request of the classroom teacher (Approved by building administrator), or where required by an IEP or 504 plan.

During the instructional day, all Devices shall be silenced and stored in the students' bookbags, backpacks, and/or personal bags except as set forth below. The school day includes but is not limited to, transportation to and from school by school bus, lunch breaks, recess periods, class changes, study halls, and any other structured or unstructured district activity that occurs before, during, or after the school day. Use of Devices might be allowed at appropriate times during the school day as noted below by grade level.

**Use: Content**

Devices shall not be used in an illegal manner or in a way that violates a published Board of Education policy or regulation (including school based regulations). Any image depicting persons in any place or situation in which there is a reasonable expectation of privacy may not be published, broadcast, or transmitted to any other person/device without the consent of the person/persons appearing in the image. Prohibited conduct specifically includes creating, sending, sharing, viewing, receiving, or possessing an indecent visual depiction of oneself or another person.

Audio and/or video recording devices and other Devices may be authorized for student use by the principal, and/or their designee, during a class and only in support of a student's specific education needs (IEP/504). In such cases, if a lesson is being recorded, the teacher and the entire class must be notified that the lesson is being recorded. Students may wear a smartwatch, provided the same is used solely as a watch and not as a communication device.

Examples of prohibited uses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- In a locker room or restroom;
- In any place or situation in which a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, without the person's permission (if the person is mentally impaired, permission must be obtained from the person's parent or guardian);
- In a way that would violate copyright law;
- To harass, intimidate, or bully another person;
- To invade a person's privacy;

- To send any form of harassing, threatening, or intimidating message or image at any time to any person (such communication may also be a crime);
- To take pictures without the specific permission of the subject of the picture;
- To record (video or audio) of oneself or another individual while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation, while at school-sponsored events, or at such times not authorized by the principal or designee;
- Any use which violates academic integrity, such as taking pictures of an assessment, sending the questions or answers to students, or providing assistance to students on an assessment in a manner that violates Board policy.

Any improper or unauthorized use of a Device while on school property, while on school-sponsored transportation, while at school-sponsored events, or at such times not authorized by the principal or designee, is prohibited. Unauthorized or improper use of such Devices may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion.

A student's Device may be searched and/or seized by an administrator (or designee in accordance with a specific administrative directive if there are grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated the law, Board policy, regulation, or the rules of the school. If a Device is confiscated, the Device will be returned to the student at the end of school day. If appropriate, a parent/guardian will be required to pick up the Device at school.

### **Responsibility/Liability**

Any student who chooses to bring a Device to school shall do so at their own risk and shall be personally responsible for the security of their Device. Neither the district personnel nor the Board of Education will assume any responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage, or vandalism to a Device brought onto school property, or for the unauthorized use of any such Device. Students may not store Devices in non-secured locations, including cubbies and lockers.

### **School Based Regulation**

Each school must establish a school-based regulation regarding the use of Devices on school property (that conforms with Policy 5131.8, this regulation and each grade level's regulations contained). The school-based regulations may treat different kinds of Devices differently. By way of example only, cell phone use may be permitted during lunch breaks, while use of a handheld video game device during lunch breaks may be prohibited.

**Elementary School Students**

Elementary school students may possess Devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation provided such devices are not visible, used, or activated, and are kept in the “off” position upon entrance into the building and throughout the instructional school day. Students must keep their Devices stored in a non-visible secure location or a location determined by their teacher during the instructional school day. Students may use their Devices while waiting for dismissal at the end of the instructional school day (unless otherwise directed by their administrator or classroom teacher) and as allowed by the school principal. At all times when a Device is in use, students must comply with the requirements of the “Use - Content” section above.

**Middle School Students**

Middle school students may possess Devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation provided such Devices are not visible, used, or activated, and are kept in the “off” position upon entrance into the building and throughout the instructional school day. Middle school students must keep their Devices stored in a non-visible secure location, or in a location determined by their teacher. Students may use their Devices while waiting for dismissal at the end of the instructional school day (unless otherwise directed by their administrator or classroom teacher) and as allowed by the school principal. At all times when a Device is in use, students must comply with the requirements of the “Use - Content” section above.

**High School Students**

High school students may possess Devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation provided such Devices are not visible, used, or activated, and are kept in the “off” position throughout the instructional school day. High school students may use their Devices before the first bell, at lunch, at dismissal, and any time they are not in class (unless otherwise directed by their administrator or classroom teacher) and as allowed by the school principal. High school students must keep their Devices stored in a non-visible secure location, or in a location determined by their teacher. At all times when a Device is in use, students must comply with the requirements of the “Use - Content” section above.

Teachers and students will talk about how cell phones and Devices support the classroom, enrich student learning, and promote the safety of students, school staff and school property. Topics will include digital literacy and citizenship, standards for use of Devices during class, steps in response to alleged violations of classroom standards, students’ rights in terms of the search and

seizure of cell phones, and the harm done by taking photos/videos of others, cyberbullying, harassing, sexting, stalking, cheating, and unlawful dissemination of an intimate image.

**IEP, 504, or Health Care/Medical Plan**

Students may use Devices during class time when authorized pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a Section 504 Accommodation Plan, or a Health Care/Medical Plan with supportive documentation from the student's physician.

**Health, Safety, or Emergency Reasons**

Exceptions to the restrictions in this policy, in part or in its entirety, may be made for health, safety, and emergency reasons by the Principal.

**School Trips or School-Sponsored Activities**

The use, display, or activation of cellular phones or other wireless communication devices during school trips or school-sponsored activities shall be at the discretion of the Principal or designee, but shall not be disruptive to the activity.

**Other Reasons**

Other reasons determined appropriate by the Principal.

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