

USE OF CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN SCHOOL

The Bristol Warren Regional School District is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive learning environment for all students and has high expectations for student behavior, academic integrity, and responsible use of existing and emerging technologies capable of capturing and/or transmitting data or images. The Bristol Warren School Committee recognizes that inappropriate use of personal cellular phones and/or other personal technology devices during instructional time can have a disruptive effect on student learning and the educational environment. Students who possess and/or use such devices at school sponsored events are expected to demonstrate the greatest respect for the educational environment and the rights and privacy of all individuals within the school community.

Students are required to power down and place their cell phones in a locked Yondr/magnetic pouch at the beginning of the school day. The magnetic pouch will remain with the student. The pouches will be unlocked at the end of the school day, allowing students to regain access to their phones.

In regard to cell phones, wearable technology, (i.e., smartwatches) and/or other portable or personal devices:

- A. The Bristol Warren Regional School District accepts no responsibility for cell phones or other personal electronic devices that are lost, damaged, or stolen at school or while traveling to and from school; or during school sponsored events, field trips, etc.;
- B. Upon entry into the building, students must power down and secure any cell phone and/or smart watch or electronic device in their school-provided pouch. Any exception to this policy will only be through express written agreement between the school, the student, and the parent/guardian
- C. Earbuds and headphones may not be used at any time during school hours unless given explicit permission from a teacher or administrator, or under accommodations provided to a student under a 504 or Individualized Education Plan.
- D. Any allowable use of cell phones and electronic devices must not violate existing school policies including but not limited to policies regarding electronic devices;
- E. Cell phones and all other personal electronic devices may not be used to:
 - a. photograph, record, or film others without their consent;
 - b. record a disruption on campus that could be used to degrade, threaten, intimidate, or dehumanize the person(s) involved;
 - c. take photographs or videos or record in any way in private areas such as locker rooms, restrooms, and/or dressing areas;

- d. send or display pornographic or inappropriate messages, pictures, videos, or images;
- e. bully, humiliate, harass, or intimidate any school-related individuals, or violate local, state, or federal laws in relation to such behaviors.

Cell Phone and Electronic Device Searches

The search of cell phones and other electronic devices for pictures, text messages, video, audio, or uploaded/downloaded material in connection with an investigation regarding an alleged violation of school rules or school policy is permissible if the search is reasonable in its inception and justified in its scope. Acceptable searches may include, but are not limited to, searches for video, audio, pictures, text messages, emails or other data.

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action which may include confiscation of the personal device. Office phones are available for emergency use.

If a student should lose, destroy, or damage a pouch the student/families will be responsible for the replacement fee.

Specifics about daily procedures will be in the student handbook.

Exemptions for Exceptional Circumstances:

Individual students may have extenuating reasons for needing access to their personal device during school hours such as:

- Monitoring or managing health conditions
- The device is a negotiated adjustment to a learning program for a student with a disability or learning difficulty
- The student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have access to their device including being a parent themselves or a primary caregiver to a younger sibling or unwell family member

Please contact the school if you need to complete a request for an exemption form due to one of these exceptional circumstances. These requests are considered by the principal on a case by case basis.

Policy Adopted: October 28, 2024

Bristol Warren Regional School District, Bristol, Rhode Island