

## **HORRY COUNTY SCHOOLS PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to create a phone-free school environment that fosters a positive learning experience free from electronic distractions. By prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices during the school day, this policy aims to provide an environment that enhances focus and engagement, allowing students to develop the college and career-ready skills outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Students will have more opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, collaborate with peers, and cultivate the essential skills necessary for success in college, careers, and life.

This policy has been developed in compliance with the General Appropriations Bill, H. 5100 of 2024, Proviso 1.103 and is applicable to grades kindergarten through twelve for the 2024-2025 school year.

Proviso 1.103 (SDE: Anti-Bullying/School Safety) To receive state funds allocated for State Aid to Classrooms, a school district shall implement a policy adopted by the State Board of Education that prohibits access to personal electronic communication devices by students during the school day. For purposes of this provision, a personal electronic communication device is considered to be a device not authorized for classroom use by a student, utilized to access the Internet, wi-fi, or cellular telephone signals.

### **I. Definitions:**

A. "Personal Electronic Device," hereinafter referred to as "device," means any device utilized to access the internet, wi-fi, cellular telephone signals, or to capture images or video. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, and gaming devices.

B. "Personal Electronic Device Accessories," hereinafter referred to as "device accessories," include any wired or wireless accessory or wearable technology that connects to a device and any other accessory commonly used in conjunction with a personal electronic device.

C. "School Day" is defined as the period of time that a student is present on the school campus from their arrival (i.e., tardy bell) until afternoon dismissal at the end of the instructional day. This policy may also apply to school buses, field trips, and athletic events. The applicability of this regulation to these activities will be determined by the school district.

D. "Access" is defined as viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the purpose of communication, internet access, gaming, recording, or any other function commonly associated with devices. During the school day, devices should be powered off and stored as directed by the school district. Exceptions granted for medical necessity,

authorized for classroom use, or other authorized reasons should be in writing and are not considered violations of this definition.

E. "Authorized for Classroom Use" is defined as the use of a personal electronic device that is explicitly approved by the District Superintendent or his/her designee in writing. The approval must include alignment with a standards-aligned educational objective that cannot be reasonably achieved using district-owned devices. Students must be provided with clear instructions on the appropriate use of devices and ensure that their use aligns with the approved educational objectives. The District Superintendent or his/her designee may revoke approval at any time if it is determined that their use does not meet the intended educational objectives or is causing disruptions.

## II. Policy Implementation and Enforcement:

A. During the school day, students are prohibited from accessing their personal electronic devices, unless authorized for classroom use. Students may not wear or access device accessories during the school day. Students must store their devices and device accessories in lockers, backpacks, or otherwise as directed by the school district during the school day. Districts may forbid student possession of devices and device accessories on school property.

B. In a national or state testing environment, all personal electronic devices must be powered off and stored away for the student who is testing. Failure to comply with this requirement will be cited as a testing violation and may render all completed tests as invalid.

C. Electronic devices may not be used in locker rooms, bathrooms, or other locations where the presence of such devices poses an unreasonable risk to the safety, welfare, or privacy of others.

D. If explicitly required by a student's IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan, the student shall be allowed to access their personal electronic device for medically or educationally necessary purposes described and required for administration of the IEP, Medical Plan or 504 plan.

E. A student who is a member of a volunteer firefighting organization or emergency organization may be authorized to carry a device with written permission from the District Superintendent or his/her designee.

F. Personal electronic devices may be used while traveling for a field trip or athletic event regardless of the time of day. Personal electronic devices may also be used while traveling to and from school on district provided bus transportation. Students may not use personal electronic devices to access inappropriate material, taking pictures of other students without permission, texting inappropriate information to others, or making inappropriate phone calls while on a field trip, athletic event, or to and from school on a district provided bus transportation.

G. If the school experiences an emergency situation, the administration may determine that students should be allowed access to their personal electronic device for the purpose of communication with parents/guardians.

H. If a student violates the preceding rules during the school day, the student will be subject to progressive consequences in the student code of conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures.

### **HCS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (CD-5 grade)**

Students who attend an HCS Elementary School may not have personal electronic devices or accessories visible or powered on during the school day or while they are on the school campus. This school day is defined as when they enter the school building and ending when the dismissal bell sounds. These devices include cell phones and all other personal electronic devices and accessories including, but not limited to, air pods, smart watches, tablets, wireless earbuds, handheld gaming devices, etc.

These devices **MUST** be stored in the student's clear bookbag and must be powered off once students enter the building and remain off and out of sight until the end of the school day. Schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

For every cell phone/electronic device violation, the following will apply:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted.
- When confiscated, cell phones/electronic devices will be stored in a secure location until the parent is able to retrieve it.
- A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone/electronic device from the front office (times determined by school).

Disciplinary consequences:

- 1st violation: Warning, Parent Contact
- 2nd violation: Warning, Parent must pick up the confiscated device.
- 3rd violation: 1 day ISS, Parent must pick up the confiscated device.
- 4th violation: 2 days ISS, Parent must pick up the confiscated device.
- 5th violation: 1 day OSS, Parent must pick up the confiscated device.

### **HCS INTERMEDIATE AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

Students who attend an HCS Intermediate School or Middle School may not have personal electronic devices or accessories visible or powered on during the school day or while they are on the school campus. This school day is defined as when they enter the school

building and ending when the dismissal bell sounds. These devices include cell phones and all other personal electronic devices and accessories including, but not limited to, air pods, smart watches, tablets, wireless earbuds, handheld gaming devices, etc.

These devices MUST be stored in the student's clear bookbag and must be powered off once students enter the building and remain off and out of sight until the end of the school day. Schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

For every cell phone/electronic device violation, the following will apply:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted.
- When confiscated, cell phones/electronic devices will be stored in a secure location until the parent is able to retrieve it.
- A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone/electronic device from the front office (times determined by school).

Disciplinary consequences:

- 1st violation: Warning
- 2nd violation: 1 day ISS
- 3rd violation: 2 days ISS
- 4th violation: 1 day OSS
- 5th violation: 3 days OSS
- 6th violation: 5 days OSS
- 7th: Evidentiary hearing

If a student refuses to give up their cell phone or electronic device, the student will receive a referral for (270) Refusal to Obey and the following consequences will apply:

- 1st violation: 1 day OSS
- 2nd violation: 1- 3 days OSS
- 3rd violation: 3 - 5 days OSS
- 4th violation: Evidentiary hearing

### **HCS HIGH SCHOOLS AND PROGRAM SCHOOLS (AAST and ATA)**

Students who attend an HCS High School and Program School (AAST and ATA) may not have personal electronic devices or accessories visible or powered on during the school day or while they are on the school campus. This school day is defined as when they enter the school building and ending when the dismissal bell sounds. These devices include cell phones and all other personal electronic devices and accessories including, but not limited to, air pods, smart watches, tablets, wireless earbuds, handheld gaming devices, etc.

These devices MUST be stored in the student's clear bookbag and must be powered off once students enter the building and remain off and out of sight until the end of the school day. Schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Limited exceptions may be applicable as specified by the high school's administration.

For every cell phone/electronic device violation, the following will apply:

- Parents/guardians will be contacted.
- When confiscated, cell phones/electronic devices will be stored in a secure location until the parent is able to retrieve it.
- A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone/electronic device from the front

Disciplinary consequences:

- 1st violation: Warning
- 2nd violation: 1 day ISS
- 3rd violation: 2 days ISS
- 4th violation: 1 day OSS
- 5th violation: 3 days OSS
- 6th violation: 5 days OSS
- 7th: Evidentiary hearing

If a student refuses to give up their cell phone or electronic device, the student will receive a referral for (270) Refusal to Obey and the following consequences will apply:

- 1st violation: 1 day OSS
- 2nd violation: 1- 3 days OSS
- 3rd violation: 3 - 5 days OSS
- 4th violation: Evidentiary hearing

### **HCS EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL AND SCHOLARS ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL**

HCS Early College High School students and Scholars Academy High School students attend classes on college campuses. This policy will only be enforced when students are physically located at the main campus buildings for Early College High School and Scholars Academy High School. However, it may be necessary for students to access their personal electronic devices as determined by the school administration and college or university.

Students may not have personal electronic devices or accessories visible or powered on during the school day or while they are on the main school campus. This school day is defined as when they enter the school building and ending when the dismissal bell sounds. These devices include cell phones and all other personal electronic devices and

accessories including, but not limited to, air pods, smart watches, tablets, wireless earbuds, handheld gaming devices, etc.

These devices **MUST** be stored in the student's clear bookbag and must be powered off once students enter the building and remain off and out of sight until the end of the school day. Schools are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Disciplinary consequences:

- 1st violation: Warning
- 2nd violation: 1 day ISS
- 3rd violation: 2 days ISS
- 4th violation: 1 day OSS
- 5th violation: 3 days OSS
- 6th violation: 5 days OSS
- 7th: Evidentiary hearing

If a student refuses to give up their cell phone or electronic device, the student will receive a referral for (270) Refusal to Obey and the following consequences will apply:

- 1st violation: 1 day OSS
- 2nd violation: 1- 3 days OSS
- 3rd violation: 3 - 5 days OSS
- 4th violation: Evidentiary hearing

**\*This policy goes into effect on January 22, 2025.**