

Policy

CELL PHONES/PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Code JICJ Issued _____

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.

Proviso 1.103 (2024 - Anti-Bullying/School Safety) provides as follows:

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.

This policy is adopted consistent with this Proviso and is applicable to grades kindergarten through 12 for the 2024-25 school year. This policy shall be included in the District's publication of the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools and the student handbook. The administration may establish additional guidance or an administrative rule as may be necessary to implement this policy.

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, tables, 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.
- D. "Access" is defined as viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for the

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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. This 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 disruption.

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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. 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.

Adopted 6/14/01; Revised 11/14/02, 11/06, 6/9/16, 5/11/23, 12/12/24

Legal references:

- A. S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:
 - 1. Section 59-63-280 - Possession of paging devices by public school students; mobile telephones included; adoption of policies-
- B. Other:
 - 1. General Appropriations Bill, H5100 of 2024, Proviso 1.103 – Anti-Bullying/School Safety.