

Electronic Devices and Cell Phone-Free Education Policy

In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 33, to support a consistent and focused educational experience, students are permitted to use only Poquoson City Public School (PCPS) division-issued devices, such as Chromebooks, during operational hours for educational purposes. These devices are provided to enhance learning and give students access to a wide range of educational resources, ensuring they have the tools necessary to succeed in the classroom. As each student is equipped with a division-issued device, the use of any other personal electronic communication device is not permitted during school hours.

This policy helps maintain a controlled digital environment, minimizes distractions, and ensures all students have equitable access to learning tools. Students are expected to use their division-issued devices responsibly and in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the division.

Students who choose to bring personal devices to school do so at their own risk and must understand that the division, its schools, and its employees are not liable for loss, theft, damage, or any other issues related to these devices. Students will be responsible for securing their phone. School employees will not be responsible for providing storage locations during class time, nor will they be responsible for locating a missing device or addressing any damages that may occur.

Students must use school-based communication tools and platforms (whether in the office, classroom, or other centralized location) to communicate needs with parents. Each school has a protocol in place to address family emergencies and other essential communication needs of students during school hours.

Definitions

“Away” means that the device should not be on a student's person, including in pockets.

“Bell-to-Bell” means from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day to begin instructional time until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day. This includes lunch and time in between class periods.

“Bookbag/Backpack” means a bag used by students to store books, devices, and other school supplies. This definition does not include purses or other personal storage bags.

“Cell Phone-Free Education” means the age-appropriate elimination or restriction of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices in public schools.

“Cell Phone” means a personal device capable of making calls, transmitting pictures or video, or sending or receiving messages through electronic means. The definition of cell phone includes non-smart phones, which are limited to making phone calls or sending text messages, a smart

phone that encompasses these features, and other future personal electronic communication devices with similar characteristics.

“Instructional time” means any structured or unstructured learning experience that occurs from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day.

“Personal Electronic Communication Device” means any personal device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, Bluetooth capabilities, or directly connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include some wearable devices such as smart watches, as well as personal headphones, earbuds, laptops, tablets, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

“School Staff” means Administration, Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Bus Drivers/Aides and Coaches.

In the Elementary and Primary School (PreK-5), Cell Phone-Free Education policy states:

1. Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices will not be used by elementary or primary students within the school building or on school grounds.
2. If a parent decides that an elementary or primary student should bring a Cell Phone or Personal Electronic Communication Device to school, the device must be powered off and stored **Away** from the student and in their backpacks during the Bell-to-Bell school day.
3. Elementary and primary school students are prohibited from using Personal Electronic Communication Devices or Cell Phones on school buses. This policy applies to all bus rides, including those before and after school as well as school-sponsored trips.

In the Middle School (6-8), Cell Phone-Free Education policy states:

1. Middle school students shall not have a Cell Phone or Personal Electronic Communication Device during the Bell-to-Bell school day.
2. If Cell Phones or Personal Electronic Communication Devices are brought to school, they must be powered off and stored **Away** from the student in the student’s assigned locker during the Bell-to-Bell school day.
 - a. When students are on school sponsored trips during school hours, it is up to the discretion of School Staff to allow Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device usage.

3. Outside of the Bell-to-Bell Instructional Time, Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices may be used on the middle school campus before and/or after school.
4. Students are prohibited from taking pictures or recording videos on any school bus, whether traveling to and from school or participating in a school-sponsored trip.

In the High School (9-12), Cell Phone-Free Education policy states:

1. High school students shall not have a Cell Phone or Personal Electronic Communication Device during the Bell-to-Bell school day.
2. If cell phones or personal electronic communication devices are brought to school, they must be powered off and stored **Away** from the student during the bell-to-bell school day.
 - a. Students are expected to store their devices in bookbags/backpacks, lockers, vehicles, or any other designated locations permitted by the school.
 - b. When students are on school sponsored trips during school hours, it is up to the discretion of School Staff to allow Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device usage.
3. Outside of the Bell-to-Bell Instructional Time, Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices may be used on a high school campus before or after school.
4. Students are prohibited from taking pictures or recording videos on any school bus, whether traveling to and from school or participating in a school-sponsored trip.

Exemptions to Cell Phone-Free Education Policy

Exemptions will be made on an individualized basis, as determined by a student's individualized health care plan, 504 plan, and IEP. Students with these exemptions may only access these devices for the purpose stated in their IHP, IEP or 504 plan.

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