

STUDENT USE OF ELECTRONIC TELECOMMUNICATION DEVICES

In the St. Mary Parish School Board is dedicated to providing a healthy educational environment to public school students. The School Board recognizes that the use of cellular telephones, with their rapidly developing technological advances, which now include text messaging, photography, and other features, can impair the validity of classroom assessments, violate student privacy, possibly detonate explosive devices, hamper the efforts of administrators charged with maintaining a safe and productive school environment, and severely disrupt the educational process.

No student, unless authorized by the school principal or his/her designee, shall use or operate any cellular telephone or other electronic telecommunication device, including but not limited to, any facsimile system, radio paging service, mobile telephone service, intercom, electro-mechanical paging system, cameras, video tape recorders, MP3 players, etc., in any public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during the instructional day, or on a school bus.

No student, unless authorized by the school principal or his/her designee, shall possess, on his/her person, an electronic telecommunication device throughout the instructional day, including wearable technology capable of sending or receiving text messages and other similar notifications.

If a student brings an electronic telecommunication device in any public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during an instructional day, the electronic device shall either be turned off and properly stowed away for the duration of the instructional day or prohibited from being turned on and used during the instructional day. Electronic telecommunication devices, shall include, but not be limited to, cellular telephones, personal computers, laptops, electronic instruments, iPads, iPods, wearable technology such as smartwatches, tablet devices, e-readers, or similar devices.

These provisions may also apply to any school-sponsored event, including athletic competitions and field trips, which take place during an instructional day.

These provisions shall not be applicable to a student whose Individualized Education Program, Individualized Accommodation Plan, Section 504 plan, or Individualized Health Plan requires the student's use of an electronic telecommunication device.

During the instructional day, parents or guardians may contact students through the school's office.

Students shall not utilize school-issued devices to access personal messaging features and social media accounts not used for educational purposes.

Unless authorized by the school principal or his/her designee, any cellular telephones

and/or other electronic telecommunication device in use, or operation during the instructional day shall be confiscated by a faculty or staff member at the time of the infraction. A student's refusal to relinquish the device shall result in the student being suspended pending a hearing with the Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. The confiscated device shall be held in the school's office, and the student's parents or guardian shall be contacted. Parents shall be allowed to retrieve the device before, or at the end of the regular academic day. When a student's device is confiscated pursuant to this policy, he/she shall be disciplined in accordance with the *Guide to St. Mary Parish Schools*.

Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the use or operation by any person, including students, of any cellular telephone or other electronic telecommunication device in the event of an emergency.

DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the terms below shall be defined as follows:

An *emergency* means an actual or imminent threat to public health or safety which may result in loss of life, injury, or property damage.

Use or operation of a cellular telephone or other electronic telecommunication device means the device is being held by a student, or is turned on, makes an audible sound, or is in a mode capable of receiving or transmitting signals.

The *instructional day* shall begin at the time students arrive on campus prior to the tardy bell and conclude upon the dismissal bell at the end of the day.

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Ref: La. Rev. Stat. Ann. "17:239, 17:416, 17:416.1; Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators, Bulletin 741, Louisiana Department of Education Board minutes, 7-8-04, 7-13-06, 9-9-10, 6-9-11, 7-9-20, 8-8-24, 3-13-25.