

Adopted: March 20, 2025

Reviewed: _____

Twin Cities International Schools
PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES (525.5)

I. PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to support the charter school's focus on learning in alignment with the school's mission to ignite students' passion for learning, cultivate a strong foundation of knowledge, and foster a sense of community within our schools. Possession and use of personal electronic communication devices must be regulated to ensure that such devices do not disrupt or interfere with the education process or school operations, impair the safety, welfare, and privacy of students and staff, or are used as part of an act of academic dishonesty.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

To minimize the impact of personal electronic communication devices on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment and to support school environments in which students can engage fully with their classmates, their teachers, and instruction, the school board has determined the use of personal electronic communication devices by students during school hours should be limited.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. "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. "Bell-to bell" includes lunch and time in between class periods.
- B. "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 a non-smart phone that is limited to making phone calls or text messages and a smart phone that encompasses the above features.
- C. "Cyberbullying" means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including but not limited to a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.
- D. "Instructional Time" means any structured or unstructured learning experiences that occur 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.
- E. "Personal Electronic Communication Device" means any personal device capable of connecting to a cell phone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or directly

connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include cell phones, wearable devices such as smart watches, personal headphones, earbuds or pods, laptops, tablets, virtual reality devices, and other personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

- F. “Stored” means a cell phone or personal electronic communication device not being carried on the student’s person, including not in the student’s pocket. Storage options may include, but are not limited to, in the student’s backpack, in the student’s locker, in a locked pouch, or in a designated place in the classroom, as determined by school administration.

IV. PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE USE AND STORAGE

A. Personal Electronic Communication Device Use

1. Students are prohibited from using personal electronic communication devices during the school day at TCIS.
 - a. Students are prohibited from using personal electronic communication devices on school premises from bell-to-bell, which includes but is not limited to instructional time in learning spaces, hallways, lunch periods, recess, school-sponsored programs, events or activities, or any other time during the designated school day.
 - b. All personal electronic communication devices (i.e., cell phones and smart watches) shall be turned off and put away in student lockers from the arrival of school until 2:43pm.

B. Off-Campus School-Sponsored Activities

School administration may establish guidelines for personal electronic communication device possession and use during off-campus school-sponsored activities, such as extracurricular activities, outdoor and service trips, and school field trips. These guidelines will be provided at pre-activity meetings, activity-specific permission slips, and by other means as appropriate in the circumstances.

V. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF AND STORAGE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

A. Limitations on Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices

1. Personal electronic communication devices may not be used in any manner that causes or results in disruption of the educational environment or school-sponsored extracurricular activities or events or impairs or interferes with charter school operations.
2. Devices, including but not limited to personal electronic communication devices, with audio, video, or photo-taking capabilities shall not be used at any

time in bathrooms or other locations where the presence of such devices poses an unreasonable risk to the safety, welfare, or privacy of others. Confiscation and search of such devices will occur if found in these areas.

3. Students may not use a device to record, transmit, or post audio, videos, or photos of a person or persons on school grounds or on a school bus without the express permission of school staff in addition to the express consent of the individual or individuals that are the subjects of the recording.
4. Personal electronic communication devices may not be used to engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, or other activity prohibited under federal or state law or under charter school policy.
 - a. Social media usage is not allowed at school. Using any function of a cell phone/device to spread rumors, bully, make fun of, exclude, put down or create a hostile environment interfering with educational opportunities will result in disciplinary action.
5. Personal electronic communication devices shall not be used during a lockdown drill, a fire drill, or a similar safety drill.

B. Storage of Personal Electronic Communication Devices

Students shall keep their personal electronic communication devices in their locker or an area designated by the classroom teacher at all times when personal electronic communication device use is prohibited.

V. EXCEPTIONS

- A. Nothing in this policy prohibits a student from using a personal electronic communication device for a purpose documented in the student's individualized education program, a plan developed under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or a health care plan in force regarding the student.
- B. A student may use a personal electronic communication device to monitor or address a health concern or medical condition upon permission granted by school administration.
- C. Students may use a personal electronic communication device when the use is necessary to respond to or report an emergency. For purposes of this policy, "emergency" means an actual or imminent threat to the health or safety of students and/or school personnel, which may result in death, bodily injury, or substantial property damage.
- D. A student may use a personal electronic communication device during a time at which use would otherwise be prohibited when the student has been granted permission from a staff member to use the device. If the charter school implements a curriculum that uses technology, students may be allowed to use their own personal electronic

communication devices to access the curriculum. Students who are allowed to use their own devices to access the curriculum will be granted access to any application or electronic materials when they are available to students who do not use their own devices, or provided free of charge to students who do not use their own devices for curriculum.

- E. Students who need to make a call may request permission to use a telephone in the building office.

VI. DISCIPLINE

If a student violates this policy, a teacher or administrator shall take the following progressively serious disciplinary measures:

1st Offense:

- Collected by staff member, given to Dean of Students for documentation and safe keeping
- Parent notified by phone
- Student can pick up device at the end of 6th period from Dean of Students

2nd Offense:

- Collected by staff member, given to Dean of Students for documentation and safe keeping
- Parent Contacted by phone & discussion
- Student can pick up device at the end of 6th period from Dean of Students

3rd Offense:

- Collected by staff member, given to Dean of Students for documentation and safe keeping
- Parent Contacted by phone at the Dean's convenience
- Parent can pick up device from **Dean's Office with conference**

4th Offense:

- Collected by staff member, given to Dean of Students for documentation and safe keeping, transferred to Principal
- Parent contacted at Principal's convenience
- Parent can pick up device from **Principal's Office with conference**

5th Offense:

- Collected by staff member, given to Dean of Students for documentation and safe keeping, transferred to Principal
- Parent contacted at Principal's convenience and notified of next step by Principal
- The device will be placed in the "June Box" (lock box that holds electronics until the final day of school) and returned on the last day of school*.

**A parent/guardian may contact the Principal or Executive Director and make an appointment to collect their child's cell phone/electronic device at any time.*

VII. CHARTER SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The charter school is not responsible for, nor is it required to investigate, any lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic communication devices brought onto school grounds or the bus or school-sponsored activities or events.
- B. The charter school board directs the executive director and charter school administration to establish additional rules and procedures regarding student possession and use of personal electronic communication devices in schools as the executive director and charter school administration find appropriate. These rules shall be consistent with this policy and other applicable charter school policies. These rules and procedures should seek to minimize the impact of personal electronic communication devices on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment. These rules and procedures may be designed for specific school buildings, grade levels, or pursuant to similar criteria.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. Ch. 13 (Minnesota Government Data Practices Act)
Minn. Stat. § 13.32 (Educational Data)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.031 (School Student Bullying Policy)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.73 (School Cell Phone Policy)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.166 (Limit on Screen Time for Children in Preschool and Kindergarten)
Minn. Stat. § 125B.15 (Internet Access for Students)
Minn. Stat. § 125B.26 (Telecommunications/Internet Access Equity Act)
29 U.S.C. § 794 (Nondiscrimination under Federal Grants and Programs)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of Charter School Employees)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)
Away for the Day (www.awayfortheday.org)
MASSP/MESPA, *The Cell Phone Toolkit* (July 2024)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524.5
Charter Orig. 2025