

## SCHOLAR USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth expectations for appropriate use of existing and emerging technologies which scholars may possess, including but not limited to **scholar-owned** cellular phones and other personal electronic devices capable of transmitting data or images.

It is recognized that parents may provide a cell phone to a scholar for safety or medical reasons. It is also recognized that these devices, which may be given with a noble intent, can become distractions to the academic environment and therefore negatively impact instruction. In consideration of the advancement of technology and the prevalence of electronic devices in our society, the Board will allow the possession of cell phones and other electronic devices at school, on buses, and school sponsored events, as outlined within this policy.

### II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Jackson Public School District holds high expectations for scholar behavior, academic integrity and responsible use of existing and emerging technologies, such as cellular phones, digital picture/video cameras and/or phones and other personal electronic devices capable of capturing and/or transmitting data or images. Scholars who possess and/or use such devices at school or school sponsored events shall demonstrate the greatest respect for the educational environment and the rights and privacy of all individuals within the school community. The possession of an electronic device is not a violation of the Code of Scholar Conduct. However, the possession of an electronic device when used to disturb the educational process, carry out criminal activity, or disturb/interfere with the safety-to-life issue for scholars being transported on a Jackson Public Schools bus or at school facilities, are infractions of the Scholar Code of Conduct.

### DEFINITIONS

Electronic devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Smartphones
- Digital cameras and video recorders
- Camera phones
- Tablets (e.g., iPad, Kindle Fire)
- Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)
- MP3 players and iPods
- Portable gaming systems (e.g., Nintendo Switch, PlayStation Portable)
- Smart watches (e.g., Apple Watch, Samsung Galaxy Watch)
- Smart glasses (e.g., Google Glass)
- Wireless headphones, earbuds, and earpieces (e.g., Beats, AirPods)
- Bluetooth-enabled accessories and speakers
- Laptops and Chromebooks (when not used for authorized instructional purposes)

- Pagers or beepers
- Any device capable of capturing, recording, storing, displaying, or transmitting audio, video, images, or data

This definition is intended to be broad and inclusive. It applies to any personal electronic item, whether or not explicitly listed above, that can be used for communication, entertainment, photography, information access, or data transmission.

### **III. STANDARDS FOR RESPONSIBLE USE AT SCHOOL, ON SCHOOL BUSES OR AT SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. Respect for the Educational Environment**

- i. Cellular phones and other personal electronic devices shall be turned off and kept out of sight and preferably stored in a scholar's backpack at all times during the instructional day.
- ii. Scholars may not have cell phones on their person, including but not limited to pockets, socks, jackets, or any other accessible location after the intake process.
- iii. Scholars are permitted to use personal electronic devices on school buses, provided such use does not interfere with the peace, privacy, or safety of others. Acceptable uses include silent activities such as playing games, reading, or listening to music with headphones. However, sound from the device must not be audible to others. Speakers, volume on high, or device use that causes distractions to the driver or other passengers is strictly prohibited. Additionally, speaking at a moderate tone is allowable.

At all times, electronic devices must be used in accordance with the Scholar Handbook and Code of Conduct. Prohibited uses include, but are not limited to:

- Recording or photographing others without permission
- Engaging in bullying, harassment, or threats
- Viewing or sharing inappropriate content
- Any activity that compromises safety or disrupts the bus environment

Violation of this provision may result in disciplinary action, including loss of device privileges and confiscation of the device.

- iv. Scholars must comply with all requests from school and district staff regarding the use and storage of cellular phones and personal electronic devices.
- v. Cellular phones and personal electronic devices shall not be used in any way that disrupts or detracts from the educational environment or cause a disturbance on the school bus, on school grounds, or at school events during the instructional day.
- vi. The use or visibility of cellular phones or other personal electronic devices is prohibited in all areas of the school, including but not limited to, restrooms, classrooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, auditoriums, media centers, labs, hallways, and testing centers during the school day.
- vii. Permission to leave class in response to any electronic device shall not be granted.
- viii. In the case of a documented medical necessity<sup>1</sup>, a scholar shall be permitted to

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<sup>1</sup> When a licensed advanced practice registered nurse, physician or surgeon determines that the possession or use of a cell phone is medically necessary for the health or well-being of the scholar, and there is medical documentation to support the same.

possess or use a cell phone or other personal electronic device for the stipulated medical necessity, provided the scholar receives *advanced* written authorization from the school principal.

**ix.** To legitimately report a violation of the Code of Scholar Conduct, a potentially dangerous situation or other misconduct to school officials or other legal authorities shall be considered responsible use.

**x.** In the event of an emergency requiring communications with parents or guardians, scholars should report to the office to speak with an administrator or other school official.

## **B. Respect for Privacy Rights**

**i.** Scholars shall not photograph, record, or videotape other individuals at school or at school sponsored activities without their knowledge and consent, except for activities considered to be in the public arena such as sporting events or public performances.

**ii.** Scholars shall neither e-mail, post to the Internet, nor electronically transmit images of other individuals taken at school without their expressed written consent.

**iii.** Scholars are strictly forbidden to either use or display cellular phones or other personal electronic devices in locker rooms and restrooms.

## **C. Assuring Academic Integrity**

Scholars shall not use cellular phones or other electronic devices in any way that may cause a teacher or staff member to question whether the scholar may be cheating on tests or academic work or violating copyright policy. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Having a device visible or in hand during a quiz, test, or exam.
- Using devices to search for answers, take pictures of test materials, or share assignments.
- Accessing AI tools, group chats, or saved notes during assessments.
- Recording or copying copyrighted content (e.g., textbooks, films, or instructional materials) without permission.

### **Example:**

A scholar is seen with a smartwatch actively displaying text messages during a test. Although the scholar claims the messages are unrelated, the use of the device during the assessment raises a reasonable suspicion of cheating. This behavior violates both the electronic device policy and the academic integrity policy, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## **D. Compliance with Other District Policies**

Use of cellular phones or other personal electronic devices must not violate any other District policies, including those regarding scholar privacy, scholar code of conduct, electronic technologies acceptable use, or harassment. If a violation occurs involving more than one District policy, consequences for each policy may apply.

## **IV. VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY**

**A. First Infraction:** The first infraction shall result in confiscation of the device, which is to be turned in to the school office. Notification to a parent or guardian shall be given that the device will be kept for five (5) school days.

**B. Second Infraction:** The second infraction shall result in confiscation of the device,

which is to be turned into the school office. Notification to a parent or guardian shall be given that the phone will be kept for ten (10) school days.

**C. Third Infraction:** The third infraction shall result in confiscation of the device, which is to be turned into the school office. Notification shall be given to a parent or guardian that the phone will be kept for forty-five (45) school days.

**D. Repeated or Severe Infraction:** Any additional violations will carry the same consequence as the third infraction: device confiscated for forty-five (45) days.

Refusal to surrender a device will result in disciplinary action consistent with the code of conduct. Additionally, the appropriate disciplinary action for violation of this policy will still be enforced.

**Example:**

A scholar is observed using a cell phone during instructional time. When asked by a staff member to surrender the device in accordance with policy, the scholar refuses and places the phone in their pocket. The staff member repeats the directive, and the scholar again refuses to comply. In this situation, the scholar's refusal to surrender the device constitutes disrespect towards others and will result in disciplinary action under the Scholar Handbook (e.g., out-of-school suspension depending on severity and prior infractions). Additionally, the scholar will still face the original consequence for violating the electronic devices policy, including the confiscation of the device for the designated number of days.)

Discipline for scholars with disabilities shall be administered in accordance with district policy, state, and federal law.

Scholars assigned to an alternative setting as a disciplinary consequence are prohibited from the possession and/or use of an electronic device at all times during the school day and while on school premises or in school vehicles.

**V. WAIVER OF LIABILITY**

Jackson Public School District will not be responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen wireless communication or personal electronic device. Neither will school district employees be held liable for wireless communication or personal technology devices that are damaged, lost, or stolen. Note: Numerous wireless communication devices are reported stolen each year. Scholars are advised not to leave devices unattended or unsecured. If you have a wireless communication device or other personal technology at school, and it gets stolen, do not expect school administrators to discontinue other administrative responsibilities to try to recover it for you. School personnel will be asked to investigate and seek recovery only as time and circumstances permit. Notwithstanding, all school district policies are applicable to those determined to be responsible for the theft, damage or destruction of such items.

**VI. SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS**

No scholars, teachers, or proctors are allowed to possess and/or use any wireless communication or personal technology device, including (but not limited to) cell phones or personal digital assistance devices, during the administration of statewide tests. Wireless technology devices used only to administer the tests are excluded. When deemed

necessary, the Superintendent may develop additional guidelines or procedures consistent with the letter and spirit of this policy.

All provisions of Jackson Public Schools Board Policy JIAA—Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Policy, which includes the Scholar Acceptable Use and Internet Safety Contract, are applicable to this policy upon its adoption.

*Exceptions to this policy may be granted for scholars who require the use of electronic devices as assistive technology or translation tools as part of an approved accommodation plan.* All accommodations are governed by relevant District Policies and must follow the established procedures for review and approval.

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