

**Virgin Islands'
Department of
Education**

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**THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

POLICY NAME	Personal Electronic Communication Device Use Policy			POLICY NO.	V1- 06.13.2025
EFFECTIVE DATE	June 13, 2025	DATE OF LAST REVISION		VERSION NO.	1
ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBLE	Office of Legal Counsel/Office of the Insular Superintendent STTJ & STX	CONTACT INFORMATION	340-774-0100		
APPLIES TO Apply group names to define applicable areas of staff. (I.e: stx employees, HR department, IT, entire stt-stjt personnel)					
GROUP 1	All VIDE Students	GROUP 2	All VIDE Administrators	GROUP 3	All VIDE Faculty
GROUP 4	All VIDE Staff	GROUP 5		GROUP 6	

VERSION HISTORY				
VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE	AUTHOR
1				

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Legal Counsel

Chilesa Peady

Date: June 16, 2025

Assistant Commissioner

Victor Somers

Date: July 7, 2025

Commissioner

W Marshall Hedington

Date: July 08, 2025

SCOPE

Describe to what and to whom this policy applies.

This policy applies to all Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) students, administrators, faculty, and staff.

POLICY STATEMENT

Describe the policy and the reason for the policy.

VIDE seeks to maintain an environment that prioritizes student academics, privacy, and safety by minimizing students' unsanctioned cell phone use on school grounds. By clearly outlining the ways in which cell phones can and cannot be utilized while on school grounds and in the classroom, faculty and staff will be better equipped to address misuse and repeated violations. Further, this policy informs students and parents of what constitutes misuse so students can make appropriate decisions throughout the school day. Regulating cell phone use through this policy will help to ensure students are focused, reduce the risk and exposure to cyberbullying, and further protect students' privacy while on school grounds.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Define any acronyms, jargon, or terms that might have multiple meanings.

TERM	DEFINITION
GVI	Government of the Virgin Islands
VIDE	Virgin Islands Department of Education
VIBOE	Virgin Islands Board of Education
Personal Electronic Communication Device (PECD)	Includes, but is not limited to, cellular phones, tablets, gaming devices, cellular hotspots, computers, and other electronic devices used in school settings for transmitting audio, video, data or texts.

POLICY SECTIONS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to notify students, parents, faculty, and staff of VIDE's regulation of personal electronic communication devices on school grounds and in the classroom. In addition, this policy seeks to ensure students are focused on academics, reduces students' risk and exposure to cyberbullying, and further protects students' privacy while on school grounds.

NOTIFICATIONS

All students will receive a copy of this policy annually. This policy supersedes all previously written memorandums and policies. The Department reserves the right to rescind and/or amend this and all Department policies at any time, with or without notice.

PROCEDURES

In alignment with the Virgin Islands Board of Education Electronic Device Policy, VIDE sets forth the following protocols and guidelines:

I. Permitted Uses of Personal Electronic Communication Devices (PECDs)

- a. *Classroom Use*: Students shall be permitted to possess and use PECDs in the classroom only with express, written authorization by a teacher to utilize pre-approved learning applications and platforms. At all other times, students should have their PECDs out of reach and away from their person (See Section III of this Policy).
- b. *Non-Academic Use of Devices During the School Day*: The school administrator may use his/her discretion to permit use of PECDs in certain areas of the school during certain portions of the school day or, in the case of emergency.
 - i. Emergencies include, but are not limited to:
 1. Medical emergencies;
 2. Fire;
 3. Severe weather; and
 4. Active shooter situations.
 - ii. Family Emergencies – During the school day, parents/guardians should contact the school front office and avoid texting/messaging/calling their child. Parents should continue to follow this established protocol for family emergencies to avoid disruption of the school day.

II. Prohibited Uses of Personal Electronic Communication Devices (PECDs)

- a. *Wireless Network*. Students using PECDs are only allowed to connect to the wireless network provided by VIDE. VIDE has implemented certain technology protection measures to ensure compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Any attempt to circumvent these technology protection measures such as network internet access filtering by using an electronic communication device's built-in cellular network is prohibited.
 - i. Prior to authorized classroom use, teachers must instruct students about logging on to VIDE's wireless network and remind students of the prohibition against circumventing VIDE's technology protection measures.
- b. *Social Media, Video, Music*. Students' use of social media platforms, video and music streaming platforms, and artificial intelligence sites/platforms is a de facto misuse and is prohibited on campus. These platforms and sites have been blocked on VIDE's wireless network to ensure compliance with CIPA. Student use of these platforms during school hours indicates circumvention of VIDE's technology protection measures and constitutes a violation of this Policy.
- c. *Prohibited Activities*:
 1. Accessing or sharing defamatory, abusive, obscene, vulgar, sexually explicit, threatening, discriminatory, or illegal materials.
 2. Engaging in "cyberbullying." - Defined by VIBE K-12 Bullying Intervention, Prevention and Remediation Policy Section 2.3 as the intentional use of the internet or other digital communication devices to bully peers. Such internet speech can be vulgar, cruel, threatening, and harassing to teachers, school administrators, or fellow students.
 3. Engaging in "cyber stalking." - Defined by VIBE K-12 Bullying Intervention, Prevention and Remediation Policy Section 2.3 as the anonymous engagement in a course of conduct to communicate or to cause to be communicated- words, images or language by or through the use of electronic mail or electronic communication, directed at a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person and serving no legitimate purpose.
 4. Non-educational use of the device, including but not limited to, gaming, social media, and unauthorized streaming, i.e. viewing or downloading content such as movies, TV shows or music.
 5. Installation of unauthorized software or altering system configurations, i.e. creating additional user profiles.

6. Accessing inappropriate or illegal content i.e. pornographic material, violent content, hate speech, gambling websites, etc.
 7. Using sites that promote dishonesty, i.e. cheat sheets for exams and essay mills.
- d. Illegal Activities:
1. Using PECDs for any illegal activity or in violation of VIDE policies, school rules, or the Virgin Islands Board of Education's Student Discipline and Electronic Device policies.
 2. PECDs shall not be used to violate or break local, state, federal, or international law or policy.
- e. Unauthorized Access to Online Platforms:
1. Prohibited access to specific online platforms, such as blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites, while using PECDs or VIDE networks.

III. Securing Personal Electronic Communication Devices (PECDs)

- a. At the start of each class, students shall place all PECDs out of reach, off of their person, and inaccessible until the end of class (i.e. in a backpack, purse, bag, etc.)
- b. Throughout the duration of class, students shall not retrieve PECDs or utilize them in any way unless given express permission by the teacher (See Section I.a. of this policy).
- c. At the start of class, teachers may opt to have students place their PECDs in a secure location at the front of the classroom to be retrieved later by the students at the conclusion of class, upon obtaining pre-approval from their administrator.
 - i. Requests for approval should be in writing, and the teacher must describe in detail the manner in which PECDs will be collected and secured.

IV. Enforcement

- a. Misuse of personal electronic communication devices are subject to disciplinary action as follows:
 - i. First offense – a verbal warning
 - ii. Second offense – a written reprimand
 - iii. Third offense – confiscation of the device in accordance with this policy and a required parent/guardian conference (the instructional guidelines and privilege of using a PECD in the school setting will be reviewed).
- b. Attached hereto as Appendix B is the Cell Phone Infraction Form to be utilized by teachers, staff, and administrators to document a student's violation of this PECD Use Policy and the Board's Electronic Device policy.
- c. Level IV offenses as defined in the Student Discipline Policy related to the use of PECDs will result in immediate confiscation regardless of the number of prior infractions.
- d. In instances of student infractions that go beyond the third offense, a student can be banned from use of his/her PECD on school grounds up to the end of the semester by the school administration.
- e. Administrators, teachers, and staff may conduct random spot checks to ensure compliance with the VIBOE's and VIDE's policies.

V. Confiscation of Personal Electronic Communication Devices (PECDs)

- a. Schools shall return confiscated PECDs at the end of the school day and should make every possible effort to ensure they are not kept for longer than two (2) school days.
 - i. For minor students, confiscated PECDs shall only be retrieved by a student's parent or guardian at the end of the school day.
 - ii. For students who are 18 or older, confiscated PECDs may be retrieved by the student or the student's parent or guardian at the end of the school day.

VI. Acceptable Use Agreement/Disclaimer of Liability

- a. A PECD Acceptable Use Agreement is attached as Appendix A and is required to be signed annually by the student and parent/guardian.
- b. The school administrator must ensure that the PECD Acceptable Use Agreement is signed by each student at the beginning of each school year or, if a transfer student, at the beginning of the student's tenure at the school.

- c. VIDE shall not be responsible for the loss, theft or damage to any PECD.
- d. Persons who bring PECDs onto school property do so at their own risk.

EXCEPTIONS

Describe exceptions here.

No exceptions.

RELATED POLICIES, LOCAL/FEDERAL STATUTES, AND OTHER REFERENCES

This procedure is guided by provisions included in the following:

- Virgin Islands Board of Education Electronic Device Policy
- Virgin Islands Board of Education Student Discipline Policy
- Virgin Islands Department of Education Technology and Internet Use Policy (TIUP)
- The Children Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 15 U.S.C. §§ 6501-6506

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Office of the Insular Superintendent STTJ & STX	Creation of the policy
Office of Legal Counsel	Review for legal sufficiency
VIDE Assistant Commissioner	Pre-Approval of the policy
VIDE Commissioner	Approval of the Policy

CONTACTS

SUBJECT	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL
Policy	STX Superintendent Sharlene Belton-Gonzalez	340-774-0100	sharlene.belton@vide.vi
Policy	STTJ Superintendent Stefan Jurgen	340-774-0100	stefan.jurgen@vide.vi
Input	Keila M. Belt, Esq., /Chilesa J. Ready, Esq. Office of Legal Counsel	340-774-0100	keila.belt@vide.vi
Input	Marcus Ready, Chief Information Technology Officer	340-774-0100	marcus.ready@vide.vi



APPENDIX A

**Personal Electronic Communication Device
Acceptable Use Agreement**

This agreement between the Virgin Islands Department of Education ("VIDE") and _____ ("Parent/Legal Guardian") witnesses that the Parent/Guardian was provided with and has read the Personal Electronic Communication Device Use Policy ("Policy") and understands the following terms and conditions pertaining to Personal Electronic Communication Devices (PECDs):

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The agreement commences from the first day of the school year and ends on the last day of the school year.
2. Student use of a PECD on school grounds is governed by this Policy.
3. The use of PECDs for any illegal or inappropriate purpose is strictly forbidden.
4. Students will be disciplined for any violations of possession, use and prohibited operation of PECDs, up to and including confiscation according to the PECD Use Policy and VIBOE's Student Discipline Policy.
5. If a PECD is found to have been used for prohibited purposes in violation of this Agreement and the PECD Policy, the Student shall be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in Section 4 and 5 of this Policy and the VIBOE's Student Discipline Policy.
6. VIDE shall not be responsible for the loss, theft or damage to any PECD.
7. Any individual who brings PECDs onto school property does so at their own risk.

PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW:

- a. Name _____
- b. Place and Address of Work and Student's School:
Work: _____

School: _____

- c. Parent's Contact Information (Phone and Email): _____

STUDENT AGREEMENT:

I, _____, have read, understand, and agree to abide by the provisions of the Personal Electronic Communication Device (PECD) Acceptable Use Agreement and PECD Use Policy of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). I understand and agree that in the event that a third party makes a claim against the VIDE as a result of my use of a PECD, the VIDE reserves its right to respond to such a claim as it sees fit and hold all offending parties, including myself, responsible.

I release the VIDE, its affiliates, and its employees from any claims or damages of any nature arising from my possession or use of a PECD. I also agree not to hold VIDE responsible for the loss, theft, or damage to any PECD. This agreement shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the United States Virgin Islands.

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

PARENT AGREEMENT:

I, _____, as the parent/legal guardian of the above named student, acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree that my child/dependent must abide by the provisions of the Personal Electronic Communication Device (PECD) Acceptable Use Agreement and PECD Use Policy of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE). I understand and agree that in the event that a third party makes a claim against the VIDE as a result of my child's/dependent's use of a PECD, the VIDE reserves its right to respond to such a claim as it sees fit and hold all offending parties, including myself, responsible.

I release the VIDE, its affiliates, and its employees from any claims or damages of any nature arising from my child's/dependent's possession or use of a PECD. I also agree not to hold VIDE responsible for the loss, theft, or damage to any PECD. This agreement shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the United States Virgin Islands.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



APPENDIX B

Cell Phone Infraction Form

Student Name/Identification #: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher Name: _____

1st Infraction - Date: _____

Incident Description:

Student Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Action Taken: Verbal Warning Written Warning Confiscation & Parent Conference

2nd Infraction - Date: _____

Incident Description:

Student Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Action Taken: Verbal Warning Written Warning Confiscation & Parent Conference

3rd Infraction - Date: _____

Incident Description:

Student Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Action Taken: Verbal Warning Written Warning Confiscation & Parent Conference