

RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES
STUDENT CELL PHONES

I. DEFINITIONS

“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-smartphone that is limited to making phone calls or text messages and a smartphone that encompasses the above features.

“Personal Electronic Device” means any personal device capable of connecting to a cell phone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or that directly connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include cell phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches, personal headphones, earbuds or pods, laptops, tablets, virtual reality devices, and other personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics. Electronic devices owned by Richfield Public Schools are not personal devices.

II. DISTRICTWIDE REQUIREMENTS

To minimize the impact of personal electronic 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, Richfield Public Schools has determined the use of personal electronic devices by students should be limited.

Personal electronic 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 District operations. All student use of personal electronic devices must adhere to Policy 107: Electronic Use and Communications.

Devices, including but not limited to personal electronic devices with audio, video, or photo-taking capabilities shall not be used at any time in locker rooms, bathrooms, or other locations where the presence of such devices poses an unreasonable risk to the safety, welfare, or privacy of others.

Personal electronic devices may not be used to engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, or other activity prohibited under federal or state law or under District policy.

Students shall not use personal electronic devices during a lockdown drill, a fire drill, or a similar safety drill.

Students may possess and use personal electronic devices on the school bus before and after school hours. Students are expected to follow all the same behavioral standards related to the use of personal electronic devices while on the school bus that they would on school property or at school activities, functions or events. Using a personal electronic device on a school bus to play audio at a volume that is distracting to the bus driver is also prohibited.

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

III. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT CELL PHONES AT RICHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Students may possess or use personal electronic devices on school property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events according to the following guidelines:

- Before school until the beginning of the school day (8:40 a.m.).
- During a student's lunch period.
- During a student's passing time.
- After school as signaled by the 3:30 bell.

It is expected that personal electronic devices are silenced and put away during a student's scheduled instruction time. Students will be considered "in class" once the bell rings.

Teachers will support students to maintain the expected policy within their classroom. If a student does not honor the expectations at the classroom level, they may be referred to their grade-level behavior specialist for support in storing the device for the remainder of the day. Repeated patterns of behavior may result in higher level administrative interventions, possibly including a contract with turning in the device (to be stored in a secure location) at the start of each school day and picking it up at the end of each school day.

IV. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT CELL PHONES AT THE RICHFIELD COLLEGE EXPERIENCE PROGRAM (RCEP)

Students may possess or use personal electronic devices on school property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored events according to the following guidelines:

- Before school until the beginning of the school day (8:40 a.m.).
- During a student's lunch period (12:15-12:45 p.m.).
- During a student's passing time (11:20-11:25 a.m. and 2:10-2:15 p.m.).
- During a student's passing time on Fridays only (10:55-11 a.m.).
- After school (after 3:30 p.m.).

Cell phones and smartwatches must be silenced and kept in backpacks or pockets during learning blocks at school. Whether a student is at school for one hour or six hours, smartphones and similar devices will be stored safely, securely, and silently in a student's backpack or in a class or office phone caddy. The use of these devices during work time will not be permitted unless explicitly authorized by a teacher for educational purposes.

Teachers will support students to maintain the expected policy within their classroom. If a student does not honor the expectations at the classroom level, they may be referred to student support services for support in storing the device for the remainder of the day. Repeated patterns of behavior may result in higher level administrative interventions, possibly including a contract with turning in the device (to be stored in a secure location) at the start of each school day and picking it up at the end of each school day.

V. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT CELL PHONES AT RICHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Prohibited Usage:

- All personal electronic devices must be turned off and stored in lockers during school hours (8:40 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.).
- These personal devices should not be used, seen, or heard during this time.

Consequences for Violation:

Teachers or staff will notify the behavior team to collect the device to secure in the office.

First to Second Offense:

- The personal electronic device will be confiscated and secured in the office until the end of the school day.

Third Offense and Beyond:

- A parent/guardian must pick up the personal electronic device from the school.
- An individual device plan may need to be established with an administrator.

By adhering to this policy, students can focus on their education without the distraction of personal electronic devices.

VI. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT CELL PHONES AT RPS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Prohibited Usage:

- Cell phones must be turned off and stored in lockers or given to a teacher during school hours. Cell phones are not to be out at all during school hours.
- Smartwatches can be used as a timekeeping device, but not as a communication device. Communication features should be shut off during the school day.

Consequences for Violation:

First to Second Offense:

- The personal electronic device will be confiscated until the end of the school day.

Third Offense and Beyond:

- A parent/guardian must pick up the personal electronic device from the school.
- An individual device plan may need to be established with an administrator.

By adhering to this policy, students can focus on their education without the distraction of cell phones and smartwatch communication features. While we understand that parents/guardians may choose to have their student bring a cell phone for communication purposes before or after school, school staff is not liable for any lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

Students who need to contact caregivers during the school day must obtain permission from their teacher or the office and use the school phone.

VII. EXCEPTIONS

Nothing in this guideline prohibits a student from using a personal electronic 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.

A student may use a personal electronic device to monitor or address a health concern or medical condition upon permission granted by the school administration.

Students may use a personal electronic 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.

If a parent/guardian needs to be in closer contact with their student throughout the school day for a safety or medical reason, they should reach out to the school principal to set up a specific plan.

VIII. SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY

The District is not responsible for, nor is it required to investigate, any lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic devices brought onto school grounds, the bus or to school-sponsored activities or events.

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:

Board Policy 107: Electronic Use and Communications
Board Policy 113: Bullying Prohibition
Board Policy 412: Public and Private Personnel Data
Board Policy 541: Student Behavior
Board Policy 581: Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records
Board Policy 742: Student Transportation Services

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