

Bettis Preparatory Leadership Charter School
Video Cameras in Classrooms, Hallways, School Vehicles and Other
School Property

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for video cameras on school property.

Video cameras can serve a useful purpose when placed in common areas to include, but not be limited to, classrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, parking lots, school vehicles, and other school property for instructional, safety, and security purposes. Accordingly, video cameras may be operated from visible places in classrooms, hallways, meeting rooms, parking lots, school vehicles, and other school property and may be used by school staff in accordance with this policy.

Use of Video Cameras for Safety/Security Purposes

The administration may place a video camera in any common area located in the school. Video cameras may be used as a part of a multifaceted approach to promote the safety and security of students, staff, and visitors while on school grounds and to help protect school property. The administration will determine when it is appropriate to utilize cameras in classrooms or common areas for safety/security purposes.

Video surveillance is not to be ordinarily used in locations where appropriate confidential or private activities/functions are routinely carried out (e.g. private offices). The principal or his/her designee must authorize an exception to this on the grounds that no other supervision option is feasible and/or that the need outweighs the privacy interest of the person likely to be observed. The school staff member(s) who occupy the private space in question on a daily basis must be notified of the presence of the surveillance equipment.

Custody of Video Recorded for Safety/Security Purposes

The Principal and any designee of the Principal shall have custody of and maintain video recorded on school property for safety/security purposes. All video must be maintained in a secure location to which students do not have access. Surveillance video recorded in common areas may be rewritten or deleted, but not before 15 days have elapsed. However, if surveillance video exists of an incident that results in immediate disciplinary action against a student or staff member, a video copy of the incident is to be maintained as long as needed, including time for any appeals that may result from such immediate disciplinary action.

Use of Video Cameras for Instructional Purposes

The principal or his/her designee may determine when it is appropriate to activate cameras in classrooms or common areas for educational purposes such as documenting student progress or recording student presentations and activities for later review, and his/her determination will be final.

Students may not activate video cameras at any time unless they are acting pursuant to the express instructions of a teacher or administrator.

Confidentiality

The school shall treat all video recorded pursuant to the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other applicable federal and state laws. Accordingly, the school shall release or allow viewing of video only in certain defined situations consistent with federal and state law.

Discipline Proceedings

The school may use video recordings as evidence in student discipline proceedings. In such instances, the parents/legal guardians shall be notified that the school intends to introduce a video in advance of a disciplinary proceeding and the school shall provide the parent/legal guardian a reasonable opportunity to view the video prior to the proceeding.

Reporting Violations

Any person who has reason to believe that a video camera is being used in violation of this policy, or in an otherwise improper manner, should immediately notify the principal or Board of Directors of the school. An investigation into the allegations shall occur and appropriate remedial or disciplinary actions shall be taken as necessary.

Penalties for Improper Use

Any staff member who violates the terms of this policy or otherwise misuses a video camera shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Students who violate the terms of this policy or otherwise misuse a video camera shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the school's student behavior code. Violations of the laws of the United States or the state of South Carolina may also subject a person to criminal prosecution.

Notice Requirements

Students, parents/legal guardians, and staff members must be notified annually that students, staff members, and visitors are subject to being recorded in common areas at any time. Additionally, notices must be conspicuously posted on school property at all regular entrances and all other access points on school grounds. These notices should advise individuals that video surveillance may be in use.

Legal References:

United States Code of Laws, as amended:

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C.A. Section 1232(g).