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## Student Smartphone Usage Policy

Blue Ridge Academy recognizes the importance of creating learning environments that support student engagement, academic integrity, safety, and student well-being. Because Blue Ridge Academy operates through a non-classroom-based independent study model, this policy is intended to support appropriate instructional boundaries while maintaining the flexibility necessary for individualized learning and communication between students, families, and staff.

In accordance with California law requiring public schools, including charter schools, to adopt a policy limiting or prohibiting student smartphone use, the Board adopts the following policy governing student smartphone and personal electronic device use during school-sponsored instructional activities and programs.

The purpose of the Blue Ridge Academy Governing Board approving this Student Smartphone Usage Policy is to accomplish the following:

1. Provide Definitions to common terms used throughout the policy.
2. Outline the General Expectations of smartphone and/or personal device use.
3. Identify Permitted Use of smartphones and/or personal devices.
4. Identify Prohibited Use of smartphones and/or personal devices.
5. Outline Virtual Learning Expectations.
6. Explain the Enforcement of this policy.
7. Detail Stakeholder Participation and Policy Review

### **1. Definitions**

For purposes of this policy:

“Smartphone” means a mobile phone capable of internet access, messaging, social media access, photography, video recording, gaming, or application use.

“Personal electronic devices” include smartphones, smartwatches, earbuds/headphones, tablets, or similar communication devices not issued by the school.

“Instructional activities” include virtual classes, synchronous instruction, in-person student meetings, testing sessions, intervention meetings, enrichment classes, tutoring, school-sponsored events, counseling appointments, workshops, field trips, and other educational services provided by the school.

“Non-instructional time” refers to breaks, transitions between activities, and times outside active instructional programming.

### **2. General Expectations**

Students are expected to use smartphones and personal electronic devices responsibly during all school-sponsored activities.

The use of smartphones or personal electronic devices shall not:

- Disrupt instructional activities or student engagement;
- Interfere with communication between students and school staff;
- Compromise academic integrity;
- Violate the privacy rights of students or staff;
- Facilitate bullying, harassment, or inappropriate conduct;
- Interfere with school safety procedures or expectations.

Blue Ridge Academy recognizes that students in an independent study environment may appropriately utilize technology as part of their educational program; however, smartphone use shall remain limited during instructional activities except as permitted under this policy.

### **3. Permitted Use**

Students may use smartphones or personal electronic devices under the following circumstances:

- During non-instructional time, unless otherwise directed by school staff or event supervisors;
- For instructional purposes when specifically authorized by a teacher or school staff member;
- To support participation in virtual learning or approved educational activities;
- During emergencies or urgent family communication;
- When required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, medical accommodation, or documented accessibility need;
- For translation services, health-related needs, or other approved student support purposes.

Because Blue Ridge Academy serves students through individualized independent study programs, staff may authorize the educational use of smartphones when appropriate to support student learning, communication, organization, or participation.

### **4. Prohibited Use**

Students shall not use smartphones or personal electronic devices:

- During assessments, testing sessions, or academic evaluations, unless expressly authorized;
- During instructional activities without staff permission when such use is unrelated to instruction;
- To record, photograph, or distribute images/audio/video of students or staff without permission;
- To engage in academic dishonesty or plagiarism;
- To access inappropriate, harmful, or disruptive content during school-sponsored activities;
- To engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or behavior that disrupts the educational environment.

### **5. Virtual Learning Expectations**

During virtual instruction, students are expected to use smartphones and personal devices to support active participation and learning. When school-issued technology is provided, students are expected to utilize approved educational platforms and devices for instructional purposes. Staff may limit or prohibit the use of personal smartphones during certain instructional activities when school-approved technology is available.

Students may be directed by staff to:

- Silence notifications;
- Limit non-instructional device use;
- Refrain from texting, gaming, or social media engagement during instructional sessions;
- Utilize school-approved platforms or school-issued technology when available.

## **6. Enforcement**

School staff may require students to silence, store, or temporarily discontinue the use of smartphones or other personal electronic devices when their use violates this policy or disrupts instructional activities.

Interventions and consequences may include:

- Verbal reminders or redirection;
- Parent/guardian communication;
- Temporary restriction of device use during school-sponsored activities;
- Removal from instructional activities when necessary;
- Additional disciplinary action consistent with the Student Handbook and applicable law.

School administrators retain discretion to address violations based on student age, frequency of violations, educational impact, and the individualized nature of the school program.

## **7. Stakeholder Participation and Policy Review**

Prior to adopting this policy, Blue Ridge Academy solicited input from stakeholders, including students, parents/guardians, employees, and administrators, in accordance with California law.

The school may periodically gather additional stakeholder feedback to assess policy effectiveness and implementation needs.

The Board of Directors shall review this policy at least once every five (5) years and update it as necessary to ensure compliance with state law and the evolving needs of the school community.