POLICY

829.1 Personal Electronic Communication Devices - Students

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Purpose

The Board recognizes that mobile phones and electronic devices are now an integral part of the daily lives and culture of many of the district's students. Nonetheless, the Board believes that students should have an educational environment free from unnecessary disruptions and distractions. The Board has determined that the presence of mobile phones and electronic devices has the potential to distract students fom their educational mission and to otherwise disrupt the educational environment.

Authority

Therefore, the Board adopts this policy to maintain an educational environment that is safe and secure from distractions for its students, while aiming to permit students to reasonably and responsibly utilize mobile technology.

Definition

Electronic devices shall include any personal communication device that is not district authorized, including mobile telephones and smartphones; any device that can capture still images or movies; any device that can record, store, display, transmit, or receive audio or video; any device that can provide a connection to the Internet (whether wireless or wired); laptops and tablet computers; electronic gaming systems; pagers; e-readers; and laser pointers.

Guidelines

The Board prohibits the possession of laser pointers and telephone paging devices/beeper by any student in district buildings and on district property, including on district buses and vehicles; and at activities, sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the district. A school administrator may grant an exception to this specific prohibition when a student is a member of a volunteer ambulance, fire, or rescue squad or where the student has a medical condition that necessitates the use of a paging device/beeper.[1]

The Board prohibits all students from any use of electronic devices in locker rooms, bathrooms, and other changing areas.

The Board prohibits the use of electronic devices to take photographs, or to record or livestream audio or video at any time during the school day or at any school-sponsored event that is not open to the general public, unless the building administrator has authorized the photograph/video/livestream or recording by giving written consent, or unless the use is authorized for educational purposes as outlined below. **During the school day** includes the time while students are engaged in remote instruction, even if students are not physically in a school district building.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Board prohibits the use of any electronic device by any elementary school student while in district buildings, on district property and grounds including on district buses, and at school-sponsored activities. An electronic device that is possessed by any student in school buildings or on district property must remain powered off and kept out of sight at all times except as follows below.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the ability of the building administrator or his/her designee to grant approval for the use of an electronic device by a student because of a student's urgent health or safety needs, or in the event of an emergency.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the provision or use of an electronic device as stated in an Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Service Agreement. [2] [3]

Students may use electronic devices in the classroom during the school day for educational purposes if, and only if, they have the prior permission of the teacher or building administrator to do so.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Board prohibits the use of any electronic devices by any middle school student while in district buildings, on district property and grounds, and at school-sponsored activities except as follows below.

Exception -

1. Students participating in after-school activities may use mobile phones under the following conditions:

    a. The mobile phone must remain off during the after-school activity.

    b. The mobile phone may be turned on and used when authorized by the activity advisor, coach, or building administrator to make brief telephone calls to a parent/guardian, or other person providing transportation to the student.

2. Students may use electronic devices in the classroom during the school day for instructional purposes if, and only if, they have the prior permission of the teacher or building administrator to do so.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the ability of the building administrator or his/her designee to grant approval for the use of an electronic device by a student because of a student's urgent health or safety needs, or in the event of an emergency.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the provision or use of an electronic device as stated in an Individualized Educational Program or Section 504 Service Agreement. [2] [3]

HIGH SCHOOL

The Board prohibits the use of any electronic devices by any high school student during instructional times during the school day (from the beginning of 1st period until the end of last period), which includes homeroom and study halls, except that students may use electronic devices during instructional times for instructional purposes if, and only if, they have the prior permission of the teacher or building administrator to do so.

Students in the high school are permitted to use electronic devices during noninstructional times including lunch periods, before school hours, after school hours, and between classes, so long as such use does not:

1. Disrupt school activities or instruction.
2. Violate any other Board or school policies.
3. Violate state or federal law.
4. Violate any of the prohibitions set forth elsewhere in this policy.

If an electronic device utilizes the district's Internet connection, the school district's Acceptable Use Policy applies and is incorporated herein by reference. [4]

Advisors and coaches of extracurricular activities shall have discretion to regulate and limit the use of electronic devices by high school students while participating in sports or extracurricular activities and school-sponsored trips.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the ability of the building administrator or his/her designee to grant approval for the use of an electronic device by a student because of a student's urgent health or safety needs, or in the event of an emergency.

Nothing in this policy shall affect the provision or use of an electronic device as stated in an Individualized Educational Program or Section 504 Service Agreement. [2] [3]

Loss or Damage to Electronic Devices

Students are solely responsible for the safe storage of any personal electronic devices that they choose to bring to school. The district shall not be liable or responsible for the loss or damage to any electronic devices that a student brings to school, extracurricular activities, to school-sponsored events or trips, or from the confiscation of an electronic device as the result of a policy violation.

Student Responsibility for Data Charges

No student shall be required to provide a personal electronic device as a condition of receiving educational instruction. If any student chooses to utilize such a device pursuant to this policy, the student and parents/guardians assume full responsibility for any phone or data charges that may result from such use.

Limitation of Technical Support

District information technology staff may not provide technical assistance to students for their personal devices. However, this policy shall not prohibit district information technology staff from providing general instructions for the configuration of such devices to access or connect to district-owned technology resources.

Penalties for Violations

The Board authorizes building administrators, teachers, and security personnel to confiscate a student's electronic devices when used in violation of this policy. All confiscated electronic devices shall be delivered promptly to the building administrator's office. Confiscated devices shall be returned to the student at the end of the school day for a first offense, and only to a parent/guardian for a second or subsequent offense.

Building administrators may impose additional disciplinary sanctions against students for violations of this policy, including suspensions from school or recommendations for expulsion from school as warranted by the specific facts and circumstances in a particular case. [5] [6]

Development of Administrative Guidelines

The Superintendent or his/her designee may develop administrative guidelines to implement this policy. The Superintendent shall ensure that students are made aware of this policy and any administrative guidelines by means of each student handbook, the district website, or other reasonable means of written communication.

Legal Footnotes

[1] **24 P.S. 1317.1**
LEGAL REFERENCE

[2] **Pol. 103.1 — Nondiscrimination of Students Eligible for Special Education Services**
POLICY REFERENCE

[3] **Pol. 113 — Special Education**
POLICY REFERENCE

[4] **Pol. 815 — Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources**
POLICY REFERENCE

[5] **Pol. 218 — Student Discipline**
POLICY REFERENCE

[6] **Pol. 233 — Suspension and Expulsion**
POLICY REFERENCE

Legal References

Additional References

1949 Act 14
LEGAL REFERENCE