

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY #: 524.5

SCHOOL BOARD POLICY NAME: PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

APPROVAL DATE(S): March 27, 2025

I. PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to support Spectrum's focus on learning in alignment with the school's mission and vision. Possession and use of personal electronic communication devices must be regulated (at a minimum) to ensure that such devices do not disrupt or interfere with the education process or school operations, impair the safety, welfare, and privacy of students and staff, or are used as part of an act of academic dishonesty.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

To minimize the impact of personal electronic communication 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, the School Board has determined the use of personal electronic communication devices by students during school hours shall be limited.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *"Bell-to-Bell"* means from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day to begin instructional time until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day. "Bell-to-bell" includes lunch and time in between class periods.
- B. *"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-smart phone that is limited to making phone calls or text messages and a smart phone that encompasses the above features.
- C. *"Cyberbullying"* means bullying using technology or other electronic communication, including but not limited to a transfer of a sign, signal, writing, image, sound, or data, including a post on a social network Internet website or forum, transmitted through a computer, cell phone, or other electronic device.
- D. *"Instructional Time"* means any structured or unstructured learning experiences that occur from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the academic school day.
- E. *"Personal Electronic Communication Device"* means any personal device capable of connecting to a cell phone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or directly connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include cell phones, wearable devices such as smart watches, personal headphones, earbuds or pods, laptops, tablets, virtual reality devices, and other personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.
- F. *"Stored"* means a cell phone or personal electronic communication device not being carried on the student's person, including not in the student's pocket. Storage options may include, but are not limited to, in the student's backpack, in the student's locker, in a locked pouch, or in a designated place in the classroom, as determined by school administration.

IV. PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE USE AND STORAGE

A. Personal Electronic Communication Device Use

1. Middle Schools

- a. Students are prohibited from using personal electronic communication devices on school premises from bell-to-bell, which includes but is not limited to instructional time, lunch periods, recess, school-sponsored programs, events or activities, or any other time during the designated school day.
- b. All personal electronic communication devices shall be kept in designated areas and turned off.
- c. Personal computers or devices will not be allowed to be used in classrooms. Spectrum Chromebooks have the appropriate monitoring and security in place to ensure all students have equal access to programs and digital resources to support their learning.

2. High Schools (9-12)

- a. Students are prohibited from using personal electronic communication devices during instructional time, which includes the entire period of a scheduled class and other times when students are directed to report to and participate in any instructional activity.
- b. Students may wear smart or electronic watches, but may not use any communication applications or features that are prohibited from use on other personal electronic communication devices and all notifications must be turned off.
- c. All personal electronic communication devices shall be kept in designated areas and turned off during instructional time. Personal electronic communication devices may be used during passing times and lunch periods; however, such use is discouraged.
- d. Personal computers or devices will not be allowed to be used in classrooms. Spectrum Chromebooks have the appropriate monitoring and security in place to ensure all students have equal access to programs and digital resources to support their learning.
- e. Students in the College and Career Center may use cell phones. However, they may not be used for phone or video calls or in any way that is distracting for other students.

B. Off-Campus School-Sponsored Activities

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

V. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF AND STORAGE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

A. Limitations on Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices

1. Personal electronic communication devices may not be used in any manner that causes or results in disruption of the educational environment or school-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activities or events or impairs or interferes with school operations.
2. Devices, including but not limited to personal electronic communication 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. Confiscation and search of such devices will occur if found in these areas.
3. Students may not use a device to record, transmit, or post audio, videos, or photos of a

person or persons on school grounds or on a school bus without the express permission of school staff in addition to the express consent of the individual or individuals that are the subjects of the recording.

4. Personal electronic communication devices may not be used to engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, or other activity prohibited under federal or state law or under school policy.
 5. Personal electronic communication devices shall not be used during a lockdown drill, a fire drill, or a similar safety drill.
- B. Storage of Personal Electronic Communication Devices
- Students shall keep their personal electronic communication devices in a secure place, such as the student's locker, a closed backpack, a storage device provided by the school, or an area designated by the classroom teacher at all times when personal electronic communication device use is prohibited.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

- A. Nothing in this policy prohibits a student from using a personal electronic communication 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.
- B. A student may use a personal electronic communication device to monitor or address a health concern or medical condition upon permission granted by school administration.
- C. Students may use a personal electronic communication 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.
- D. A student may use a personal electronic communication device during a time at which use would otherwise be prohibited when the student has been granted permission from administration to use the device. If Spectrum implements a curriculum that uses technology that can not be accessed through the Chromebook or other device provided by the school, students may be granted permission by administration to use their own personal electronic communication devices to access the curriculum. Administration will ensure access to all students.
- E. A personal electronic communication device may be stored in student vehicles parked on school property provided that the device is not removed from the vehicle while on school property.
- F. Students who need to make a call may request permission to use a telephone in the building office.

VII. DISCIPLINE

If a student violates this policy, a teacher or administrator shall take the following progressively disciplinary measures:

- A. 1st Offense - Item confiscated. Give back to student at end of day.
- B. 2nd Offense - Item confiscated. Parent/guardian contacted. Detention and parent/guardian picks up item.
- C. 3rd Offense - Item confiscated. Parent/guardian contacted. Dismissal or possible suspension. Daily check in of item to office.
- D. Inappropriate and/or illegal use of cell phones and online postings (including social media)
Warning: Taking, posting, and sending or receiving sexually explicit photos may result in suspension or expulsion and law enforcement will be notified.
Consequences: Dependent upon circumstances ranging from a warning, to a suspension, to a recommendation for expulsion.-
- E. Posting that may be considered harassment or bullying, whether posted in or out of school, that impact students at school, may be subject to discipline and/or reporting to the local police.

VIII. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Spectrum is not responsible for, nor is it required to investigate, any lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic communication devices brought onto school grounds, a school bus, or to a school-sponsored activity or event.
- B. The School Board directs the Executive Director and school administration to establish additional rules and procedures regarding student possession and use of personal electronic communication devices in schools as the Executive Director and school administration find appropriate. These rules shall be consistent with this policy and other applicable school policies. These rules and procedures should seek to minimize the impact of personal electronic communication devices on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment. These rules and procedures may be designed for specific school buildings, grade levels, or pursuant to similar criteria.

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: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 403 (Discipline, Suspension, and Dismissal of Charter School Employees)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 406 (Public and Private Personnel Data)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 506 (Student Discipline)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 514 (Bullying Prohibition Policy)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 515 (Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records)
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 524 (Internet, Technology, and Cell Phone Acceptable Use and Safety Policy)
Away for the Day (www.awayfortheday.org)
MASSP/MESPA, *The Cell Phone Toolkit* (July 2024)