

## **Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School**

### **Policy S9: Acceptable Use of Technology**

**Adopted: September 17, 2020**

**Amended: July 25, 2024**

**Amended: June 17, 2025**

#### **I. Electronic Communication Device Defined**

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “electronic communication device” shall be defined as follows: an electronic device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise operates to summon or deliver a communication to the holder.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “electronic communication device” shall include, but **not** be limited to smart-watches, cell-phones, smart-phones, tablets, e-readers, headphones.

#### **II. Limited Use of Electronic Communication Devices Permitted**

- A.** Students are only permitted to use electronic communication devices before school and the end of the school day. For the purposes of this policy, “school day” is defined as “bell to bell”.
- B.** Students are prohibited from using electronic communication devices during classroom instructional time or between class periods. All electronic communication devices shall be turned-off or placed on silent mode with no vibration alerts during classroom instructional time and between class periods.
- C.** Students are prohibited from using electronic communication devices in any way which, in the discretion of a school principal or his or her designee, poses a safety hazard or otherwise interferes with the educational mission of a school.
- D.** Students are prohibited from using an electronic communication device in connection with bullying, as defined by Board policy or state law. Such use of an electronic communication device may subject a student to disciplinary action as set forth in the District’s discipline policy.
- E.** Electronic communication devices are not permitted to be visible on a student’s person during instructional time or between class periods.
- F.** No student shall photograph, videotape, record or reproduce, via any audio or video means, another student or staff member while on school premises.
- G.** Southwest Georgia Stem Charter School shall not assume responsibility or liability for damage to, theft or loss of an electronic communication device.
- H.** Southwest Georgia Stem Charter School shall not assume responsibility for the unauthorized use of an electronic communication device.
- I.** Each administrator or their designee is authorized to provide for exceptions to this policy such as in the case of medical emergencies or other extenuating circumstances. Such exception shall be documented in writing and placed in the student’s file.
- J.** Any parent wishing to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the school directly. Emergency communications will be facilitate through official school

communication.

### **III. Acceptable Internet Usage.**

- A. Students shall receive education about the following:
  - 1. safety and security while using e-mail, chat rooms, social media, and other forms of direct electronic communications;
  - 2. the dangers inherent with the online disclosure of personally identifiable information;
  - 3. the consequences of unauthorized access (e.g., "hacking") cyberbullying and other unlawful or inappropriate activities by students online, and unauthorized disclosure, use, and
- B. All Internet users (and their parents if they are minors) are required to sign a written agreement to abide by the terms and conditions of this policy and its accompanying procedures.
- C. Students and staff members are responsible for good behavior on the school's computers/network and the Internet just as they are in classrooms, school hallways, and other school premises and school sponsored events. Communications on the Internet are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communication apply.
- D. Students shall not access social media for personal use from the school's network, but shall be permitted to access social media for educational use in accordance with their teacher's approved plan for such use.
- E. Students shall not use school technology or the school's internet network to access, send, receive, view or download obscene materials, child pornography or material that is harmful to minors.
- F. Students who are found to have engaged in cyberbullying, as defined below, or to have sent or received obscene materials shall be subject to discipline, even if the behavior did not occur on campus or in transit to campus.
- G. Users who disregard this policy and its accompanying procedures may have their use privileges suspended or revoked, and disciplinary action taken against them pursuant to the School's Discipline Policy.
- H. Any individual who has reason to believe that the School's Acceptable Use Policy is being violated should submit a written complaint detailing suspected violations to the school administration, who shall take appropriate action against any student, employee or guest found to have violated the terms of this policy.
- I. Any guest who violates the terms of this policy shall be prohibited from accessing or using school technology in the future.
- J. The School shall utilize the services of a third party data service to monitor student internet activity and to filter websites and internet applications. This service shall provide technology that inspects and analyzes unencrypted internet traffic for malware

and that blocks or filters electronic access to obscene materials, child pornography, or material that is harmful to minors.

- K. The School shall share any information it receives about the potential risk of internet usage by students with parents. Any parent who has input or suggestions on ways the school can improve enforcement of the acceptable use policy should attend a board meeting and offer comments during the public comment time or may submit suggestions to the school administration via email.
- L. The School Leader shall review discipline referrals for violations of this policy and/or cyberbullying at least annually and shall determine if the technology services utilized to prevent cyberbullying should be modified to better prevent harm to students.
- M. Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School shall not apply this policy in a way that would constitute discrimination against individuals with disabilities and shall modify this process as necessary to ensure that students with disabilities are provided appropriate supports to access their educational curriculum.

#### IV. Definitions

- A. Child pornography means any visual depiction, including any live performance, photograph, film, video, picture, or computer or computer generated image or picture, whether made or produced by electronic, mechanical, or other means, of sexually explicit conduct, as such term is defined in Code Section 16-12-100, when:
  - a. The production of the visual depiction involves a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct;
  - b. The visual depiction is of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct; or
  - c. The visual depiction has been created, adapted, or modified to appear that an identifiable minor is engaging in sexually explicit conduct
- B. Harmful to minors means that quality of description or representation, in whatever form, of nudity, sexual conduct, sexual excitement, or sadomasochistic abuse, when:
  - a. Taken as a whole, it predominantly appeals to the prurient, shameful, or morbid interest of minors;
  - b. It is patently offensive to prevailing standards in the adult community as a whole with respect to what is suitable material for minors; and
  - c. Taken as a whole, it is lacking in serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors.
- C. Identifiable minor means a person:
  - i. Who was a minor at the time the visual depiction was created, adapted, or modified; or
  - ii. Whose image as a minor was used in creating, adapting, or modifying the visual depiction;

- iii. and Who is recognizable as an actual person by such person's face, likeness, or other distinguishing physical characteristic or other recognizable physical feature.
- D. Internet means a global network that connects computers via telephone lines, fiber networks, or both to electronic information the global information system that is logically linked together by a globally unique address space based on the internet protocol or its subsequent extensions; that is able to support unencrypted communications.
- E. Obscene material means material which meets the following requirements:
  - a. To the average person, applying contemporary community standards, taken as a whole, the material predominantly appeals or panders to prurient interest in nudity, sex, or excretion;
  - b. The material, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value; and
  - c. The material depicts or describes in a patently offensive way sexual conduct as follows
    - i. Acts of sexual intercourse, heterosexual or homosexual, normal or perverted, actual or simulated;
    - ii. Acts of masturbation;
    - iii. Acts involving excretory functions or lewd exhibition of the genitals;
    - iv. Acts of bestiality or the fondling of sex organs of animals; or
    - v. Sexual acts of flagellation, torture, or other violence indicating a sadomasochistic sexual relationship
- F. Social Media Platform means an online forum that allows an account holder to create a profile, upload posts, view and listen to posts, form mutual connections, and interact publicly and privately with other account holders and users and as further defined in O.C.G.A. 39-6-1.

## V. Social Media Restrictions

- A. Students are prohibited from accessing social media platforms through the use of computer equipment, communication services or internet access that is operated, owned, leased, and made available to students by the school.
- B. Teachers may allow students to access social media platforms, if they have obtained the prior approval of the school leader. Students must;
  - a. Use Social media as directed by school personnel,
  - b. for the exclusive purpose of accessing and utilizing age-appropriate, educational resources,
  - c. under the supervision of school personnel, and
  - d. during the course of a school related activity.
- C. Any parent may request information about what social media platforms have been or intended to be accessed by their student and may prohibit their child from accessing social media platforms.

