

Wendell School District No. 232 recognizes the value and importance of electronic communication, online presence, and innovative technology tools to enhance the learning experience and work environment within the District. However, student use of personal electronic communication devices during school hours may interfere with or disrupt the educational process. Additionally, a growing body of evidence suggests that student access to cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices during the school day is detrimental to students' emotional well-being and academic growth. The purpose of this policy is to promote student health and safety, prevent distractions to learning during the school day, improve academic focus, prevent cyberbullying and foster responsible technology use. [note: additional goals/purposes can be added here, e.g., mitigate privacy concerns, support staff in maintaining a productive learning environment, etc.]

DEFINITIONS

“Personal Communication Device (PCD)” or “Devices” includes, but is not limited to, personal cell phones, tablets (e.g. iPads and similar devices), personal computers, laptops, iPods/MP3 players, electronic readers (e.g. Kindles and similar devices), pagers, and other similar devices or media players, without regard to the commercial name or manufacturer of the device, whether handheld, card models, laptop or other computer usage, or combinations of any of the above.

“Social media networks” include, but are not limited to, websites, web logs (blogs) wikis, social networks, online forums, virtual worlds, and any other social media generally available to the public that does not fall within the district’s technology network (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, blog sites, Wikipedia, etc.)

GENERAL PROVISIONS AND PROHIBITIONS

Students may not use PCDs on school property or at school-sponsored activities without prior authorization. Access to devices is a privilege and not a right. Students are required to follow the district’s Acceptable Use of Internet, Computer and Network Resources (Policy No. 942) and Acceptable Use Agreement when using devices at school. Students shall comply with any additional school or classroom rules regarding the use of devices. A student may possess a PCD in school, on school property, and at school-sponsored activities, provided that during school hours and on school vehicles the device remains off (not just placed into vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight. For high school students, PCDs may be stored in lockers, backpacks or designated classroom cubbies. For all other students, PCDs must be stored in designated classroom cubbies [or identify other storage areas]. The district is not responsible for theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to PCDs brought onto its property.

Students may not use PCDs on school property or at school-sponsored activities to access and/or view Internet websites, including social media networks, that are otherwise blocked to students at school or to take part in any activity prohibited in the district's acceptable use policy.

Except as authorized by a teacher, administrator or a student's 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP), students are prohibited from using a PCD during the school day, (including while off campus on a field trip), to capture, record and/or transmit audio or images (i.e. pictures/video) of any student, staff member or other person. Using a PCD to capture, record and/or transmit audio and/or pictures/video of an individual without proper consent is considered an invasion of privacy and is not permitted.

The use of PCDs with built-in cameras is prohibited in any school situation where a reasonable expectation of personal privacy exists. These locations and circumstances include, but are not limited to, locker rooms, bathrooms, shower facilities, and other locations where students or others may change clothes or be in any stage or degree of disrobing or changing clothes in which inappropriate or privacy violating images may be obtained. The superintendent and building principals are authorized to determine other specific locations and situations where use of PCD is absolutely prohibited.

Students may not use a PCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. In particular, students are prohibited from using PCDs to:

1. Transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, or ancestry; and
2. Engage in "sexting," i.e. sending, receiving, sharing, viewing, or possessing pictures, text messages, emails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form.
3. Engaging in any act of cyberbullying.

Students are also prohibited from using a PCD to capture and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using their PCDs to receive such information.

Parents/guardians are advised that the best way to get in touch with their child during the school day is by calling the school's main office. Students may use designated school phones to contact parents/guardians during the school day.

EXEPTIONS

PCDs may be used in the following circumstances:

1. With prior approval from the building principal.
2. During approved classroom instruction.

3. During an emergency situation involving the immediate health/safety of a student or other individual(s) or a risk of damage to property where school staff are not reasonably available to call for help.
4. Where use is required or authorized by a student's 504 plan or IEP.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION

Possession of PCDs by a student is a privilege, which may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy, or otherwise engages in misuse of this privilege.

Students who violate the privacy provisions of this policy and/or use a PCD to violate the privacy rights of another person may have their device confiscated and held until a parent/guardian picks it up, and may be directed to delete the audio and/or picture/video file while the parent/guardian is present. If the violation involves potentially illegal activity the confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement.

For the first violation, the device will be confiscated until the end of the school day at which time the student may reclaim it from the building principal's office. Subsequent violations of this policy will result in confiscation of the device for a period of time determined by the building principal. Devices confiscated on two (2) or more occasions must be reclaimed from the building principal's office by the student with his/her parent or guardian present. Repeated violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion consistent with district policy. The building principal may also refer the matter to law enforcement if the violation involves an illegal activity.

The district will use reasonable care to safeguard confiscated devices by designating a locked storage area, but does not assume liability in the event such confiscated device is lost, stolen, or damaged.

If a student or parent/guardian desires to appeal the discipline imposed pursuant to this policy, they can do so by submitting a written request to the building principal within [identify #, e.g., 5] school days. If the decision being appealed was made by the building principal, the appeal may instead be made to the superintendent. Decisions of the superintendent are final.

IMPLEMENTATION, NOTICE AND REVIEW

The district will ensure that students, staff, and parents/guardians are informed of this policy and how it will be implemented through publication in student handbooks, publication of the policy on the district's website, school bulletins, classroom discussions, and other methods deemed appropriate at the direction of the superintendent or designee. The superintendent or designee shall also develop practices and/or procedures that reinforce and address the following:

1. Digital literacy;
2. Privacy concerns;

3. The effects of cyberbullying;
4. The safe use of cell phones and smart devices during emergencies;
5. The mental and physical health effects of high levels of cell phone use and social media use; and
6. Online disinformation.

A copy of this policy will be made available to all staff. The superintendent or designee may develop practices or procedures to ensure the consistent enforcement of this policy. In addition, the superintendent or designee shall ensure that a monitoring system for cell phone use is implemented, which may include classroom rules, designated storage areas, or technology monitoring tools. The superintendent shall report to the board annually about the effectiveness of this policy and shall recommend changes to it as needed.

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LEGAL REFERENCE:

Idaho Code §33-512 – Governance of Schools
Executive Order No. 2024-11 – Phone Free Learning Act (Idaho)

CROSS-REFERENCE:

506 – Student Harassment
506.50 – Prohibition Against Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying
540 – Maintenance of Orderly Conduct
542 – Searches by School Officials
543 – Student Suspension
544 – Student Expulsion/Denial of Enrollment
545 – Disciplining Students with Disabilities (IDEA)
546 – Disciplining Students with Disabilities (Section 504)
942 – Acceptable Use of Internet, Computer and Network Resources

ADOPTED: December 17, 2019

AMENDED: December 16, 2024