

524.5L PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to support the school district's focus on learning in alignment with the district's Mission. Possession and use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices must be regulated so that such devices do not disrupt the education process or school operations; do not impair the safety, welfare, and privacy of students and staff; and are not used for 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 an engaging school environment, the school board has determined the use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices by students during school hours must 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 periods, recess, time between class periods, and any other time during the designated school day.
- B. "Cell Phone" means a personal device capable of making calls, transmitting pictures or video, or sending or receiving messages through electronic means.
- C. "Instructional Time" means any structured or unstructured learning experiences that occur from Bell to Bell, including the entire period of a scheduled class and other times when students are directed to report to and take part in any instructional activity.
- D. "Personal Electronic Communication Device" ("PECD") includes Cell Phones; wearable devices such as smart watches, headphones, earbuds or pods; laptops; tablets; virtual reality devices; and any other devices capable of connecting to a Cell Phone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or to another similar device.
- E. "Stored" means silencing a PECD and placing it in a locker, in a designated classroom space, or in another designated place as determined by school administration. "Stored" does not include being carried in a pocket, backpack or otherwise on the student's person.

IV. PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE USE AND STORAGE

Students are prohibited from using PECDs except as explicitly allowed under this policy. Any use of a PECD must comply with the limitations under Article V of this policy.

A. Elementary Schools (PreK-6)

Elementary School students are prohibited from using PECDs on school premises from Bell-to-Bell, during which time all PECDs must be Stored.

B. High Schools (7-12)

High School students are prohibited from using PECDs on school premises throughout

Instructional Time, during which all PECDs must be Stored. Use of PECDs during passing times and lunch periods is allowed but discouraged.

C. Off-Campus School-Sponsored Activities

School administration may create guidelines for PECD possession and use during off-campus school-sponsored activities. These guidelines will be provided at pre-activity meetings, activity-specific permission slips, or by other appropriate means.

V. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

- A. Use of PECDs must not interfere with the educational environment, school-sponsored extracurricular activities or events, or school district operations in any way.
- B. PECDs must not be used in locker rooms, bathrooms, or any other locations where the presence of such devices could pose a risk to the safety, welfare, or privacy of others. Notwithstanding any other disciplinary procedures in this policy, a staff member may immediately confiscate any PECDs used in these areas.
- C. Students may not use a PECD 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 a staff member and the express consent of the individual or individuals that are the subjects of the recording.
- D. PECDs must not be used to engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, or other activity prohibited under federal or state law or under school district policy.
- E. PECDs must not be used during a lockdown drill, a fire drill, or a similar safety drill.
- F. Students may wear smart or electronic watches but may not use any communication applications or features that are prohibited from use on other PECDs and all notifications must be turned off.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

Nothing in this policy is to be construed to prohibit a student from using a PECD in these circumstances:

- A. 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. To monitor or address health concerns or medical conditions after giving notice to school administration;
- C. To respond to or report an emergency in which an actual or imminent threat to the health or safety of students and/or school personnel could result in death, bodily injury, or substantial property damage;
- D. When a student has explicit permission from a staff member.

Students who need to make a call may ask for permission to use a telephone in the building office.

VII. DISCIPLINE

If a student violates any part of this policy, a staff member or administrator will take the following progressive disciplinary measures:

First offense:

Staff will confiscate the PECD and deliver it to administration. The student may retrieve the PECD from administration at the end of the school day.

Second offense:

Staff will confiscate the PECD, call the student's parents, and deliver the PECD to administration. The student may retrieve the PECD from administration at the end of the school day.

Third offense:

Staff will confiscate the PECD, deliver it to administration and call a parent to pick up the PECD. The student will be prohibited from possessing a PECD during school hours for a duration to be determined by administration.

If a student does not immediately relinquish their PECD to a staff member who has asked for it, the student may be (1) prohibited from storing, possessing, or using the PECD on school property or (2) required to turn in their PECD to the high school office from Bell-to-Bell, for the following number of days:

First offense:

Five days.

Second offense:

Ten days.

Third offense:

Fifteen days.

The administration retains the right to permanently ban a student from storing, possessing, or using a PECD on school property if the student has reached the third offense or immediately if administration determines the severity of the offense justifies such action.

VII. SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The school district is not responsible for, nor is it required to investigate, any lost, stolen, or damaged PECDs brought onto school grounds, the school bus or off-campus school-sponsored activities or events.
- B. The school board directs the superintendent and school district administration, in their discretion, to establish additional rules and procedures consistent with the intent of this policy regarding student possession and use of PECDs.

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 School District 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)

Resources:

Away for the Day (www.awayfortheday.org)
MASSP/MESPA, *The Cell Phone Toolkit* (July 2024)