

CHAPTER: STUDENTS

TITLE: USE AND POSSESSION OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Personal electronic communication and entertainment devices have become an integral and a vital part of our society and technology in the 21st Century has presented school systems with many opportunities and challenges. Student and employee use of cellular phones and other electronic devices are one such example. However, when these devices disrupt or interfere with the learning environment, school systems must institute policies to secure an uninterrupted learning and work environment.

Student Use of Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices (ECD)

When not authorized for use, cellular telephones/ECD's shall be turned off and stored in lockers. For the purpose of this policy, the school day shall be defined as the time in which a student loads a bus until they unload a bus (including the career center bus) and/or the time a student arrives on school grounds until the dismissal bell. After school tutorial and disciplinary programs are an extension of the school day for participating students and the prohibition of cell phones/ECD's in these activities extend until the conclusion of the program.

Student usage of cell phones/ECD's during extracurricular activities may be regulated by the coach or group sponsor as needed to prevent disruptions.

The use and/or display of cellular telephones/ personal listening devices (PLD) is prohibited during the school day with one exception being the students, in grades 5 -12. Students may use their cell phone/PLD before and after school, during lunch, and in between class periods. Students may not have their cell phone/PLD out or in use during any academic time without permission from the teacher for educational purposes.

Prohibited Student Use

Possession of a cellular phone or other ECD 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 the device so as to violate the law or other school rule. In addition to those guidelines set forth by county and/or state law, policies and procedures, the following violations may result in additional disciplinary action:

- Accessing and/or viewing an Internet site that is otherwise blocked to students at school.
- Sending an email, text message or other communication that harasses, intimidates, threatens, bullies, or discriminates against another individual.
- Using a camera device at school or at a school-sponsored event to take, send, download or upload a harassing, threatening, or embarrassing digital image of anyone.
- Using a camera or other recording device to capture the content of tests, assessments, homework, or class work without express prior permission from the instructor.
- If, at any time, while on school buses, the driver, other school staff or chaperones deem the use of cellular phones and other ECDs as having a negative impact on the safety or the students on the bus, or the driver's ability to provide a safe transportation environment, the driver has the authority to require all ECDs usage to cease.

Violations of this policy will result in the following penalties:

Elementary Schools:

- 1st Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian following a conference with the student and parent.
- 2nd Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian. Student will be assigned to detention or be subject to a loss of recess time.
- 3rd Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian. Student will be suspended from school for one (1) day.

Subsequent Offenses:

- Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/ guardian. Suspension may be increased and the privilege of possessing a cell phone/ECD at school may be revoked.

Middle & High School Students:

- 1st Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian. The student will be assigned to one (1) day of In-School Suspension.
- 2nd Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/guardian. The student will be assigned to one (1) day of Out-of-School Suspension.
- 3rd Offense: Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/ guardian. The student will be suspended from school for three (3) days.

Subsequent Offenses:

- Telephone/ECD will be confiscated and returned to the parent/ guardian. Suspension may be increased and the privilege of possessing a cell phone at school may be revoked.

Parents/guardians are urged to discuss this policy with their child(ren). Cell phones/ECD's will only be returned to the parent/legal guardian of the student.

In the event that a cellular telephone/ECD is used for an illegal activity, the principal shall report the matter to law enforcement officials. Use of a cellular telephone for purposes of academic dishonesty, recording of altercations, or unethical or immoral activities shall carry additional penalties at the discretion of the principal.

The Board is not responsible for theft, loss, damage or vandalism to cellular telephones/ECD 's brought onto its property.

Parents/guardians are advised that, in case of emergencies, the best way to get in touch with their children during the school day is by calling the school office.

Employee Use of Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices

Employees of Calhoun County Schools may possess a cellular phone or other ECD at work. However, when the individual is engaged in work for which the individual was hired, usage of such device is to be limited to job-related responsibilities. Examples of job-related activity would include but not be limited to: contacting parent/guardian, contacting central office, or verifying information. Cell phones/ECD usage for job-related activities should be confined to your planning period or duty-free lunch. Violations by the employee will result in disciplinary action.

Bus operators are prohibited from using a cellular phone or other ECD (not to include the emergency band radio) while driving. If a bus operator should need to use a cellular phone or other ECD related to the operation of the bus, supervision of students, or concerning a route, the bus operator shall park the bus in a safe area prior to utilizing the cellular phone or ECD.

Exceptions to this policy may be made in special circumstances with the employee's immediate supervisor or in emergency situations.

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