

## **524.5 PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The objective of this policy is to support the school district's focus on learning in alignment with the district's mission to ignite students' passion for learning, cultivate a strong foundation of knowledge, and foster a sense of community within our schools. Possession and use of personal electronic communication devices must be regulated 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 should 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. CELL PHONE USE**

The school board directs the superintendent and school district administration to establish rules and procedures regarding student possession and use of cell phones in schools. These rules and procedures should seek to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment. These rules and procedures may be designed for specific school buildings, grade levels, or similar criteria.

The school board recognizes the challenges created with personal cell phones, smart watches, and wireless ear buds/headphones during the academic portion of the school day. These devices can be distracting and can contribute to cyber bullying as well as disruption to academic time in the school day.

During the academic portions of the school day cell phones, smart watches, wireless ear buds/headphones, and other personal connected technology devices shall be stored in a secure location. Exceptions include a device prescribed by an IEP or 504, or medically directed by a physician.

As directed by administration, students will either store their "cell phones" in an administratively designated secure location in the classroom upon entering, or keep "cell phones" in their lockers.

"Cell phones" are not to be accessed during the academic portions of the school day. These rules are designed to enhance the educational experience in the classroom and to minimize distraction and the impact of cell phone and personal device use on student behavior, mental health, and academic achievement.

#### **V. PERSONAL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE USE AND STORAGE**

##### **A. Personal Electronic Communication Device Use**

1. Personal electronic communication devices including, but not limited to ear buds, headphones, smart watches, cell phones, meta glasses, etc., are prohibited. Exceptions are outlined as follows:
2. Elementary Schools (K-5)
  - 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.
3. Middle Schools/Junior High Schools

##### **Permitted Use Times**

Cell phones may be used before school, during lunch, and after school. Use of cell phones during class time is not allowed. Students are expected to silence their phones and place them in a designated location in the classroom, as determined by the teacher. Phones should not be visible or in use from the time the bell rings to begin class until the bell rings to end class.

### **Violations and Consequences**

If a student is found using a phone in violation of this policy, the teacher will confiscate the device and bring it to the office. Cell phone use is considered a privilege, not a right. The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any electronic devices brought to school.

#### 4. High Schools (9-12)

### **Permitted Use Times**

Cell phones may be used before school, during lunch, and after school. Use of cell phones during class time is not allowed. Students are expected to silence their phones and place them in a designated location in the classroom, as determined by the teacher. Phones should not be visible or in use from the time the bell rings to begin class until the bell rings to end class.

### **Violations and Consequences**

If a student is found using a phone in violation of this policy, the teacher will confiscate the device and bring it to the office. Cell phone use is considered a privilege, not a right. The school is not responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of any electronic devices brought to school.

## **Middle School/High School Cell Phone Policy – Consequences for Violations**

- **1st Offense**  
Verbal warning and documentation. Phone is confiscated and held in the office until the end of the day.
- **2nd Offense**  
30-minute detention assigned. Phone is confiscated and held in the office until the end of the day. Parent/guardian is notified.
- **3rd Offense**  
60-minute detention assigned. Phone is confiscated and held in the office until the end of the day. Parent/guardian is notified.
- **4th Offense**  
90-minute detention assigned. A cell phone use plan will be developed in collaboration with the parent/guardian and school administration. The student's phone may be required to be turned in daily to administration or may no longer be allowed on school grounds.

#### 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 in the circumstances.

## **VI. 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 extracurricular activities or events or impairs or interferes with school district 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 district 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.

**VII. 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 a staff member to use the device. If the school district implements a curriculum that uses technology, students may be allowed to use their own personal electronic communication devices to access the curriculum. Students who are allowed to use their own devices to access the curriculum will be granted access to any application or electronic materials when they are available to students who do not use their own devices, or provided free of charge to students who do not use their own devices for curriculum.
- E. A personal electronic communication device may be stored in student vehicles parked on school district property provided that the device is not removed from the vehicle

while on school district property.

- F. Students who need to make a call may request permission to use a telephone in the building office.

### **VIII. STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

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

- A. Give the student a verbal warning and require the student to store the student's personal electronic communication device in accordance with this policy.
- B. Securely store the student's personal electronic communication device in a teacher- or administrator-controlled locker, bin, or drawer for the duration of the class or period.
- C. Place the student's personal electronic communication device in the school's central office for the remainder of the school day.
- D. Place the student's personal device in the school's central office to be picked up by the student's parent or guardian.
- E. Schedule a conference with the student's parent or guardian to discuss the student's personal device use.
- F. The district may apply additional disciplinary action as appropriate.

### **VIX. STAFF DISCIPLINE**

Staff members who fail to adhere to the student cell phone policy shall face disciplinary actions to ensure consistent enforcement of district regulations. Consequences may include but not be limited to verbal or written warnings, formal verbal or written reprimands, mandatory retraining on policy compliance, performance improvement plans, or, in cases of repeated or severe violations, suspension or termination, as determined by the superintendent in accordance with district procedures. These measures aim to maintain a focused educational environment and uphold the integrity of the cell phone policy.

### **X. SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY**

- A. The school district is not responsible for, nor is it required to investigate, any lost, stolen, or damaged personal electronic communication devices brought onto school grounds or the bus or school-sponsored activities or events.
- B. The school board directs the superintendent and school district administration to establish additional rules and procedures regarding student possession and use of personal electronic communication devices in schools as the superintendent and school district administration find appropriate. These rules shall be consistent with this policy and other applicable school district 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 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)  
Away for the Day ([www.awayfortheday.org](http://www.awayfortheday.org))  
MASSP/MESPA, *The Cell Phone Toolkit* (July 2024)

Adopted: 7-28-2025