

USE OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Policy Code:

4318

The board recognizes that cellular phones and other wireless communication devices have become an important tool through which parents communicate with their children. Therefore, students are permitted to possess such devices on school property so long as the devices are not activated, used, displayed or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel. Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, electronic devices with internet capability, paging devices, two-way radios and similar devices.

A. AUTHORIZED USE

Administrators may authorize individual students to use wireless communication devices for personal purposes when there is a reasonable need for such communication. Teachers and administrators may authorize individual students to use the devices for instructional purposes, provided that they supervise the students during such use.

Although use generally is permitted before and after school, use of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices may be prohibited on school buses when noise from such devices interferes with the safe operation of the buses. In addition, elementary and middle school students who participate in after-school programs are prohibited from using wireless communication devices during such programs.

B. CONSEQUENCES FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE

School employees may immediately confiscate any wireless communication devices that are on, used, displayed or visible in violation of this policy. Absent compelling and unusual circumstances, confiscated wireless communication devices will be returned only to the student's parent or guardian.

Violations of this policy will result in consequences as provided in the school's student behavior management plan (see policy 4302, School Plan for Management of Student Behavior). Aggravating factors may subject a student to more stringent disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension. Such aggravating factors include, but are not limited to, using wireless communication devices (1) to reproduce images of tests, obtain unauthorized access to school information or assist students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates any school board policy, administrative regulation or school rule; (2) to bully or harass other students; (3) to send illicit text messages; and (4) to take and/or send illicit photographs.

C. SEARCH OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

In accordance with policy 4342, Student Searches, a student's wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law or a school rule. The scope of such searches must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not

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excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the suspected infraction.

D. LIABILITY

Students are personally and solely responsible for the security of their wireless communication devices. The school system is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage of a cellular phone or other personal wireless communication devices.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -391

Cross References: School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy 4302), Disruptive Behavior (policy 4315), Student Searches (policy 4342)

Adopted: November 3, 2011