



COMMENTS

STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES OR ELECTRONIC SIGNALING DEVICES IN SCHOOLS (Policy VII-A-11)

This is a new policy requested by the Board and/or Superintendent. The scope and purpose of the policy is to make known that the Board recognizes the growing use of cell phones or other electronic signaling devices by students for communication and information access; that such devices have the potential of disrupting the orderly operation and information technology of the school; and that the use of cell phones and other electronic signaling devices must be regulated in order to insure uninterrupted instruction, safety, decrease bullying, and reduce theft.

Summers County Board of Education

Scope: This policy is established to make known that the Board recognizes the growing use of cell phones or other electronic signaling devices by students for communication and information access; that such devices have the potential of disrupting the orderly operation and information technology of the school; and that the use of cell phones and other electronic signaling devices must be regulated in order to insure uninterrupted instruction, safety, decrease bullying, and reduce theft.

Authority: Board of Education Minutes

Adopted: 2021 (see also, Policy IV-H-20)

Amended:

Reviewed:

STUDENT USE OF CELL PHONES OR ELECTRONIC SIGNALING DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

In order to accommodate the appropriate and effective use of cell phones or other electronic signaling devices, the following guidelines are established for use of these devices during the school day.

A. Definitions

1. The term “electronic signaling devices,” refers to and includes, but is not limited to, a pager, hands-free phone apparatus, 2-way (walkie-talkie) radio, hand-held radio, computer-phone texting, portable signaling device, smart devices used for communication, blue tooth devices, cell phones and other similar electronics. Provided, blue tooth capable input devices, such as a keyboard and/or mouse, to be used with student issued a one-to-one computer may be authorized by the school level administrator.
2. The term “misuse,” includes but is not restricted to inappropriate language, harassment, intimidation, bullying, threats, or continued use of the device when instructed otherwise by a person in authority.

B. Authorizations

1. Students may bring cell phones and other electronic signaling devices to school; however, unless use thereof is specifically authorized by this policy, any cell phone or other electronic signaling device brought to school is required to be turned off and kept in appropriate storage areas, including a locker, pocket, purse, or backpack (when backpacks are permitted at the school) upon arrival and until the dismissal bell.
2. All students may use a cell phone before or after school while on school property.
3. As communication devices will continue to be an integral part of education, teachers are encouraged to incorporate such devices into the curriculum for purposes of instruction and learning, if permission from the administration is granted. School level administrators may also authorize the use of cell phones or electronic signaling devices during special activities or for health and safety reasons, as follows:

- a. sporting events held during regular school hours
 - b. health monitoring with physician's explanation
 - c. other events on school property, but outside the classroom environment; or
 - d. inclement weather or emergency
4. This policy does not prohibit any device that is used for medical purposes and is worn by a student because of a condition that requires its use. The student must have on file at his/her school, a signed statement from a licensed physician (MD, DO) prescribing its use.

C. Prohibitions & Disciplinary Action

1. Under no circumstances shall the use of such devices by students interfere with instruction or safety.
2. Cell phones and/or electronic signaling devices shall not be used in any way that threatens, humiliates, harasses or intimidates school-related individuals, including students and employees or violates local, state or federal law.
3. Cell phones should not be visible or be used on the school bus unless permission is secured from the bus operator.
4. At no time should cell phones or electronic signaling devices be connected to Summers County School wireless or wired network.
5. Any cell phone or electronic signaling device that rings or vibrates at a prohibited time or location is considered in use and will be subject to confiscation by the school administration or school staff.
6. Cell phone communication, including text messages or any cell phone function or feature, or electronic signaling devices should not be used during a school-wide emergency unless otherwise instructed. Such use violates safety regulations and could be considered a Level III inappropriate behavior.
7. Student use of a cell phone or electronic signaling device feature such as; camera, audio recording, video recording, or other image producing feature as well as text messaging for academic dishonesty, harassment, intimidation, bullying, threats or other inappropriate means is strictly forbidden. The school administration will consider such use a serious infraction, and school policy will be fully enforced.
8. Any student who violates this policy in conjunction with any other disciplinary offense will be in violation of both this policy and the Summers County Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools Policy. Such action will increase the level of the inappropriate behavior in addition to any disciplinary action taken pursuant to this policy.
9. Disciplinary action taken pursuant to this policy shall be as follows:
 - a. First offense -- Device confiscated by administration and conference with an administrator. Device may be returned to the student at the end of the school day.
 - b. Second offense -- Device confiscated by administration and student will received ISS. Device may be returned to the student at the end of the school day.

- c. Third offense -- Device confiscated by administration and student will receive ISS. Any device that is confiscated by administration for third offense or higher will not be released to the student but shall only be released to the parent/guardian of the student.
- d. Any further offense of this policy after the third offense will result in the student being prohibited from possession of any such device on school property.
- e. Special Circumstance Offenses – Any use of a cell phone or electronic signaling device to photograph or video student(s) while on school property is strictly prohibited and will result in fourteen (14) days of out of school suspension. Any posting of such photograph or video material on social media by any student, regardless of whether the student posting the material is also the student who created the prohibited photograph or video, will result in out of school suspension.

D. Miscellaneous

This policy shall be included in the Student Handbook.

If a need arise to contact a student, parents or guardians may call the school directly.

This policy is in conjunction with Summers County Schools' Safe and Acceptable Use and Social Media Policy.

The Summers County Board of Education and/or individual schools are not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen cell phones or other electronic signaling devices.