Washington County School District
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Saint George, Utah 84770
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District Policy 3740

Personal Device Use Policy

Washington County School District - Approved 5-12-2025

1. Purpose

As required by Utah State Law, this policy regulates students' use of **cell phones, smartwatches, and other emerging technology** during classroom hours to minimize distractions, maintain an effective learning environment, and allow for necessary exceptions. It directly complies with the requirements under **U.C.A §53G-7-227.**

2. Definitions

2.1. " **Cell Phone & Other Electronic Devices"** A handheld electronic device capable of transmitting and receiving voice, data, or text communication via cellular, satellite, or wireless networks. This includes smartphones, feature phones, and personal digital assistants with similar capabilities.

2.2. " **Classroom Hours"** Scheduled, teacher-supervised instructional time during regular school operating hours. This excludes lunch periods, recess, passing periods, and independent study time outside of scheduled instruction.

2.3. " **Emerging Technology"** Any device functioning as an extension of or replacement for a cellphone, excluding school-provided or required devices.

2.4. " **Smart Watch"** A wearable device resembling a wristwatch with capabilities similar to a cell phone. Devices that **only tell time, monitor health informatics, receive notifications without response capability, or track physical location** are not considered smartwatches under this policy.

2.5. " **Personal Listening Devices** " Any electronic device designed for private audio consumption, including but not limited to headphones, earbuds, AirPods, bone conduction headphones, Bluetooth speakers, and other similar wireless or wired audio devices. This definition excludes assistive hearing devices protected under the ADA.

2.6. “ **Extended Reality (XR) Headsets”** Any wearable device designed to provide virtual, augmented, or mixed reality experiences, including but not limited to Virtual Reality (VR) headsets, Augmented Reality (AR) headsets, and Mixed Reality (MR) headsets. This includes devices such as Meta Quest (Oculus), Apple Vision Pro, Microsoft HoloLens, and similar technologies.

3. Policy

3.1. Personal Device Use

3.1.1. General Policy for All Grades:

? Personal Listening Devices must be put away during the school day.

? Personal laptops, gaming devices, smart glasses, and Extended Reality (XR) Headsets are not allowed at school.

? Smartwatches are allowed unless they become a distraction to learning.

? The school and staff are not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices. Students must properly secure and care for their own belongings. Students bring electronic devices on school property or to school activities at their own risk.

? School administrators may search electronic devices when there is reasonable suspicion of inappropriate use or a violation of policy.

? During school hours, all communications should be made through the school's front office and not directly to/from the student using their smart watch or cell phone.

3.1.2. Policy for K-9 Students:

? Cell phones must remain out of sight and stored in backpacks during school hours (bell to bell).

? Smartwatches may be worn but must be in silent mode while at school, and/or otherwise not be a distraction.

3.1.3. Policy for 10-12 Students:

? Cell phones, headphones, and personal electronic devices may not be used during instructional time.

? Devices must be stored in lockers or backpacks and not carried on the body during class.

? The use of cell phones and personal electronic devices is permitted only during passing periods and lunch breaks.

3.2. Exceptions

Exceptions to Section 3.1: Personal Device use shall be consistent with district and school policies but at the judgment and discretion of school staff for the following situations:

? Responding to Health or safety emergencies impacting the student or others.

? Responding to School-wide emergencies as determined by the administration.

? Use of the SafeUT Crisis Line for crisis support.

? When required by a student's IEP or 504 Plan.

? Fulfilling a documented medical necessity requiring device usage.

3.3. Other Provisions

3.3.1. Picture taking or recording by students and parents is strictly forbidden in school or school activity private areas, such as locker rooms, counseling sessions, restrooms, dressing areas and on the playground.

3.3.2. Students are strictly responsible for their own electronic devices. If devices are borrowed or taken and misused by non-owners, device owners are jointly responsible for the misuse or policy violation(s).

4. Compliance, Enforcement, and Notification

4.1. Consequences

4.1.1. If a student intentionally uses or interacts with a device in a manner not consistent with this policy, the following consequences may follow:

? **First Offense: Students will receive one warning prior to discipline for violation of this policy, as determined by the school.**

? **Second Offense** :Teacher **confiscates the phone until the end of class** and logs the infraction in PowerSchool. (Secondary Schools only)

? **Third Offense:** Teacher **confiscates the phone until the end of the school day** and logs the infraction in PowerSchool.

? **Additional Offenses:** The phone is **held in the office until the end of the school day** . Parents will be contacted and must pick up the phone at their earliest convenience.

4.1.2. Suspension from school may occur after the fourth offense for continued disregard for this policy.

4.1.3. If the student is **combative, defiant, or insubordinate** to staff or has repeated or severe violations, additional disciplinary measures—such as parent meetings, loss of personal device privileges and suspension,—may be assigned.

4.1.4. A student's penalties for violation(s) of an electronic device policy provision may vary depending upon: the intentional nature of the violation, other disciplinary actions the student may have received and specific circumstances of the violation.

4.2. Enforcement Responsibility:

Teachers and school administrators are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

4.3. Notice to Students and Parents of this Policy

4.3.1. Parents and students shall receive annual written notice of the school district's/school's electronic device policies. Written notice may be satisfied by posting notice on the school or district website, publishing the policy in a school handbook or directory, sending the policy to the student's home or any other reasonable means. Information sent to parents should include exceptions, potential consequences, and notice that confiscated electronic devices may be subject to search by school officials.

4.3.2. A copy of the most current policy shall always be available in the school's front office and posted on the school website.

4.3.3. Schools may require parents to return a copy of the policy with a signature indicating that parents have reviewed the policy.

4.3.4. Students and parents shall be notified that law enforcement may be contacted, at school discretion, if circumstances warrant such contact.

4.4 Confiscated Electronic Devices

4.4.1. Only licensed school personnel & SRO's (unless other employees are specifically identified in policy) may confiscate student electronic devices.

4.4.2. School employees shall not search or review materials, content, or data stored on student devices unless there is reasonable suspicion that policy or law has been violated. Any such search must be limited in scope to the suspected violation and must be conducted only with prior approval from a School or District Administrator. All searches must comply with applicable laws, regulations, and district policies.

4.4.3. Personnel may search an electronic device for the explicit purpose of determining who the owner is , without administrative approval .

4.4.4. Schools will do their best to guard and protect confiscated electronic devices, but are not responsible for loss, damage, or theft.

4.4.5. Schools will make a good faith effort to notify parent(s) that electronic devices are in school's possession. Parents will be expected to retrieve confiscated devices within seven school days. Unclaimed devices cleared of personal data will be donated after four weeks.