

## STUDENT CELL PHONE AND SMART DEVICE POSSESSION AND USE

### Definitions

As used in this policy and related regulations,

"Bell to bell" means after 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 school day. "Bell to bell" includes lunch and time in between class periods.

"Smart device" means any personal electronic device that can connect to the internet and wirelessly collect, process, and transmit data, including smart watches and tablets.

### Generally

The Prince Edward County School Board establishes age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate restrictions for student use and possession of cell phones and smart devices on school property from bell-to-bell.

The superintendent issues regulations setting forth the restrictions and procedures to be followed to effectuate this policy. Any regulations issued in accordance with this policy may include additional exemptions, including procedures for emergency communications with students.

### Student Cell Phones and Smart Devices on School Property

Students are permitted to use and possess cell phones and smart devices on school property before or after bell to bell, subject to additional regulations as may be issued. Such permitted use must not result in distractions or disruptions to the learning environment, disruptive behavior, bullying, harassment, crime, or any other behavior that violates other policies, regulations or laws.

From bell to bell, students are restricted from using or possessing cell phones on school property in accordance with this policy, issued regulations, and applicable laws.

## Restrictions By Age Group

### **STUDENT CELL PHONE AND SMART DEVICE POSSESSION AND USE**

#### **General Statement**

Prince Edward County Public Schools (PECPS) maintains developmentally appropriate guidelines regarding student possession and use of cell phones and smart devices on school property during the instructional day ("bell to bell").

The superintendent will issue regulations to implement this policy. These regulations may include additional exemptions, expectations, or procedures, including how emergency communications with students are to be handled.

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#### **Student Cell Phones and Smart Devices on School Property**

- **Before and after school hours:** Students are permitted to possess and use cell phones and smart devices on school property before and after the instructional day, as long as usage does not cause disruptions to the school environment or violate other laws or division policies.
  - **During the instructional day (bell to bell):** Students are not permitted to use or possess cell phones or smart devices during the instructional day on school property unless otherwise stated in this policy or approved by school administration.
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#### **Restrictions by Grade Level**

- **Elementary School Students:**
  - May not use cell phones or smart devices during the school day ("bell to bell") inside school buildings or on school grounds.
- **Middle and High School Students:**
  - May not use cell phones or smart devices during the school day ("bell to bell") inside school buildings or on school ground

- May use devices on PECPS school buses, provided usage follows all bus rules (e.g., no picture-taking, no sharing of devices, no inappropriate content, and use of headphones/earbuds for sound).
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### **Student Non-Compliance**

Students who do not comply with this policy may face one or more of the following actions:

- Be asked to immediately secure the phone or device.
  - Be asked to take the phone or device to the main office.
  - Be required to have a parent or guardian come to the school to retrieve the device.
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### **Communication and Emergencies**

- Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the day may request to use the main office phone.
  - Parents needing to reach their child during the school day should contact the school's main office.
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### **Accommodations and Exemptions**

Students with documented needs may be exempt from this policy:

- Students with an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, **Section 504 Plan**, **Individualized Health Care Plan**, or **Limited English Proficiency Plan** may be allowed to possess and use a cell phone or smart device during the school day if required as part of their accommodations or for health monitoring.
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## Implementation and Enforcement

### Student Discipline

Students will **not** be suspended or expelled solely for violating this policy.

However, if a violation involves disruptive behavior, bullying, harassment, or other misconduct that contravenes PECPS policies, regulations, or laws, the student may face disciplinary actions consistent with the Prince Edward County Public Schools Student Standards of Conduct.

### Exemptions

Any student who, pursuant to an Individualized Education Plan, Section 504 Plan, individualized health care plan, or Limited English Proficiency plan, is permitted to possess and use a cell phone or smart device on school property, including in the classroom, from bell to bell to monitor or address a health concern or as an accommodation or assistive technology support.

### Implementation and Enforcement

The superintendent and the school administration of each elementary and secondary school in the division are responsible for implementing and enforcing this policy. Any implementation and enforcement of this policy minimizes, to the extent possible, any conflict with the instructional responsibilities of teachers or any disturbance to instructional time and does not involve any school resource officer employed in any school in the division.

### Discipline of Students

No student will be suspended or expelled solely for a violation of this policy. Any violation of this policy that involves, coincides with, or results in an instance of disruptive behavior, bullying, harassment, crime, or any other behavior that violates other policies, regulations or laws, is subject to discipline, addressed in accordance with the Standards of Student Conduct and applicable policies and regulations.

Adopted: August 6, 2025

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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-79.3:1, 22.1-276.01, 22.1-277, 22.1-279.6.

Cross Refs.: GAB/IIBEA	Acceptable Computer System Use
JFC	Student Conduct
JFCA	Teacher Removal of Students from Class
JFG	Search and Seizure
JFHA/GBA	Prohibition Against Harassment and Retaliation
JGD/JGE	Student Suspension/Expulsion
JGDA	Disciplining Students with Disabilities
JRCA	School Service Providers' Use of Student Personal Information