



Book	Policy Manual
Section	Section J - Students
Title	Cell Phone Free Education
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CELL PHONE FREE EDUCATION

Executive Order

Executive Order 33 directs various agencies to prepare guidance, in the form of "model implementation plans", for Virginia public school boards. While it requires the adoption of a cell phone-free policy by January 1, 2025, the Executive Order nowhere mandates the specifics of such a policy, which remains the purview of each school board, as such, the West Point School Board has implemented this policy.

The necessity of implementing cell phone-free education in Virginia's K-12 public schools is increasingly evident. The West Point School Board acknowledges the evidence of the alarming mental health crisis and chronic health conditions affecting adolescents, such as depression and anxiety, driven in part by extensive social media usage and widespread cell phone possession among children. The School Board feels a cell phone-free education will significantly reduce the amount of time students are able to spend on phones without parental supervision.

Definitions

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

Cell Phone-Free Education means the age-appropriate elimination or restriction of cell phones and other personal electronic communication devices in public schools.

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 a cell phone is inclusive of a non-smartphone that is limited to making phone calls or text messages, a smartphone that encompasses the above features, Bluetooth speakers or headphones, earbuds, radios, tape or digital recorders, electronic games, MP3 players, iPods, smartphones, and smartwatches and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

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 school day.

Personal Electronic Communication Device means any personal device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or that directly connects to another similar device. Personal electronic communication devices may include some wearable devices such as smartwatches, as well as

personal headphones, laptops, tablets, Bluetooth speakers or headphones, earbuds, radios, tape or digital recorders, electronic games, MP3 players, iPods, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

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 include, but are not limited to, in the student's backpack, in the student's locker, or in other school-approved area. Watches that serve a dual purpose (e.g., smartwatch) may be worn; however, phone features (e.g., texting, Internet, calls, etc.) are to be off when phone use is prohibited. Students are prohibited from using a cell phone or personal electronic communication device in restrooms and locker rooms.

Elementary Schools (K-5)

1. Cell phones and personal electronic communication devices will not be used by elementary students within the school building.
2. If a parent decides that an elementary student should bring a cell phone or personal electronic communication device to school, the device must be turned off and stored away from the student during the school day.
3. Students may use personal cell phones after school hours and to and from school on the bus while adhering to the following:
 - Student use must adhere to the Acceptable Use Agreement [\(IIBEA/GAB\)](#).
 - Inappropriate use of social media, vulgar pictures, text messages, videos, etc. shall not be permitted at any time while the cell phone is on school property, this includes school transportation.
 - Cyberbullying during school hours or any school-sponsored events after hours will result in disciplinary action. In some cases, law enforcement will be involved.
 - The student is solely responsible for the student's cell phone. The school and its staff are not liable for students' cell phones or other electronic devices for any reason.
 - Cell phones and personal electronic communication devices may not be used on school buses during the bell-to-bell instructional day (field trips).
4. Students must use school-based communication tools (whether in an office or classroom) to communicate with parents.
5. If necessary, parents/guardians should use school-based communication tools to communicate during bell-to-bell instructional time.

Middle School (Grades 6-8) and High School (Grades 9-12)

1. Middle and high school students shall not have a cell phone or other personal electronic communication device, including personal laptops or tablets, during the bell-to-bell school day.
2. If a parent decides that a middle or high school student should bring a cell phone or other personal electronic communication device, including personal laptops or tablets, to school, it must be off and stored away during the bell-to-bell school day.
3. Students may use personal cell phones after school hours and to and from school on the bus while adhering to the following:
 - Student use must adhere to the Acceptable Use Agreement (IIBEA/GAB).
 - Inappropriate use of social media, vulgar pictures, text messages, videos, etc. shall not be permitted at any time while the cell phone is on school property, this includes school transportation.
 - Cyberbullying during school hours or any school-sponsored events after hours will result in disciplinary action. In some cases, law enforcement will be involved.
 - The student is solely responsible for the student's cell phone, personal laptop or tablet, or other personal electronic communication device. The school and its staff are not liable for students' cell phones or other

electronic devices for any reason.

4. During bell-to-bell instructional time, students must use school-based communication tools (whether in an office or classroom) to communicate with parents.
5. If necessary, parents/guardians should use school-based communication tools to communicate during bell-to-bell instructional time.
6. Educators and all co-curricular and extra-curricular sponsors must use non-social media-based apps to communicate activity and athletic scheduling information with students during school hours.

Exceptions

If a student with a disability or an EL student with a documented language barrier is determined to require access to technology to ensure the provision of a free and appropriate public education, IEP, Limited English Proficiency Plan, or 504 teams will collaborate to consider appropriate identification and use of assistive technology to support a student's unique needs.

Medical exceptions for cell phones and personal electronic communication devices are allowed and must be written into 504, IEP, and/or individualized health care plans. All individualized health care plans that include cell phone or personal electronic communication device usage must be approved by the School Nurse, the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee. Students who require access to a cell phone for medical reasons must provide documentation from a licensed medical professional outlining the necessity of immediate access to a cell phone. The school administration will work with the student, parents/guardians, and medical professionals to establish appropriate guidelines for cell phone use in these cases.

Emergencies

During school emergencies, West Point Public Schools will follow the Division Crisis Plan and will communicate with families accordingly. Family emergencies should be communicated directly with the main office of the child's school. Staff may authorize student use of cell phones in the event of a school emergency.

Consequences

If a student chooses to use an electronic device, staff members will confiscate the device and bring it to the main office to be secured until the end of the school day. Students are not permitted to use cell phones and/or earbuds/headphones in the hallways at any time during the instructional day. Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may include, but is not limited to:

1st offense: The student may retrieve the device at the end of the school day from the main office and the parent/guardian will be notified. The student will also be reminded of the cell phone policy to avoid any future violations.

2nd offense: The student's parent/guardian will need to pick up the device from the main office. The student will be assigned after-school detention.

Subsequent offenses: Further offenses will be considered insubordination. The student's parent/guardian will need to pick up the device from the main office. Consequences will be assigned starting with in-school suspension and continuing up to and including out-of-school suspension or other appropriate consequences. Parents/legal guardians may be required to meet with school administrators to address their student's continued violation of this Policy.

Any student who uses a personal cell phone, communication device, or accessories in violation of a local, state, or federal crime will be referred to law enforcement and will be further disciplined for such action.

Teachers and Staff Members

1. Teachers or staff members should designate where in the instructional setting students should store personal communication devices for any student who cannot store such devices in a personal backpack, bag, purse, locker, or vehicle.
2. Students may not be authorized to use personal communication devices to fill instructional time or to occupy students instead of providing instructional activities or as a reward.
3. Teachers and staff should model appropriate cell phone use.

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