

### **Cell Phone Policy Regulations for Bristol Virginia Public Schools**

Bristol Virginia Public Schools adheres to a “Bell to Bell” cell phone policy with limited, age-appropriate considerations. In general, student cell phones are to remain off and out of sight, stored in students’ bookbags. Accessories, such as headphones or wireless earbuds, are not to be worn at times when cell phone usage is prohibited.

#### **Virginia Primary School and Virginia Intermediate School**

Written parent permission is required to be on file with the school principal for elementary school students to have cell phones in their possession while on the school bus or on the school campus. If a parent has provided written permission, the student will be allowed to keep the cell phone in his or her bookbag. The cell phone is to remain off and must remain out of sight. If the student’s phone makes sounds or is seen outside of the student’s bookbag on the bus or at school, the student will be assessed with a cell phone violation.

#### **Virginia Middle School**

Students who attend the middle school are permitted to have and use cell phones in accordance with the following restrictions based on time of day and setting. Cell phones may be used on the school bus before arriving at the school in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Guidelines. Cell phones must be powered off and stored in the students’ bookbags upon entering the school. Cell phones are to remain off and out of sight for the duration of the school day, which begins when the student enters the building and which ends when the student exits the building. If the student’s phone makes sounds or is seen outside of the student’s bookbag during restricted times or in restricted settings, the student will be assessed with a cell phone violation. Students may use their cell phones on the bus at the end of the day in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Guidelines. Students who remain on campus for a sponsored activity after dismissal may use their cell phones in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Guidelines.

#### **Virginia High School**

Students who attend the high school are permitted to have and use cell phones in accordance with the following restrictions based on time of day and setting. Cell phones may be used on the school bus before arriving at the school in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Guidelines. Cell phones must be powered off and stored in the students’ bookbags when the first period tardy bell rings. Cell phones are to remain off and out of sight for the duration of the instructional day<sup>1</sup>, which begins when the tardy bell rings and which ends when the last period dismissal bell rings. If the student’s phone makes sounds or is seen outside of the student’s bookbag during restricted times or in restricted settings, the student

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<sup>1</sup> Cell phone usage for students at Virginia High School in the cafeteria during lunchtime is addressed in the Acceptable Usage Guidelines

will be assessed with a cell phone violation. Students may use their cell phones on the bus or on campus at the end of the day in accordance with the Acceptable Usage Guidelines.

### Acceptable Usage Guidelines

Students who attend the middle school or the high school may use their cell phones on the school bus if the usage does not distract the bus driver, create excessive noise, result in the unauthorized audio or video recording of another person, or violate any other aspect of the code of student conduct.

High school students may use their cell phones on the school bus and on campus before the first tardy bell and after the last period dismissal bell if the usage does not create excessive noise, result in the unauthorized audio or video recording of another person, or violate any other aspect of the code of student conduct. High school students are permitted to use cell phones during their lunch period, in the cafeteria or courtyard, in the same manner.

Additionally, an adult providing direct supervision for a student or students can give case by case permission for the limited use of cell phones when there is a compelling reason to give such permission.

### Examples of Prohibited Usage

Cell phones used in the following manner will result in disciplinary consequences for the student:

- Unauthorized possession and/or use during a time of day or setting when cell phones are restricted
- Possessing a cell phone during a test, examination, or experiential learning activity
- Possessing and/or using a cell phone in an in-school suspension setting, restroom, or locker room
- Unauthorized recording (audio or video) of a person or setting
- Communicating messages that promote hatred; instigating, promoting, or portraying violence; harassing or otherwise diminishing or antagonizing students or staff members
- Falsifying records, identities, or in any way tampering with school accounts or software

### Consequences for Cell Phone Violations

Bristol Virginia Public Schools will adhere to a “Three Strikes” approach to cell phone violations. Each violation is school-wide and recorded with a school administrator. When a violation occurs, the adult who sees the violation is to make the student aware of the violation and provide written documentation of the violation to a school administrator. The school administrator, or someone designated by the school administrator, is responsible for making a reasonable attempt to notify the student’s parent or guardian of each violation.

First Violation – student may remain in his or her setting; a reasonable attempt to alert the parent/guardian of the violation will be made; the cell phone is allowed to remain in the possession of

the student, provided that it is powered off and stored in the student's bookbag. Refusal to comply with the policy after being notified of a violation will result in a office disciplinary referral for insubordination.

Second Violation – when an administrator determines that a student has been assessed a second violation, the student will be placed in in-school suspension for the equivalent of a full day of school; a reasonable attempt to alert the parent/guardian of the violation will be made; parent/guardian will be asked to sign an acknowledgment of the cell phone policy and the violation; the cell phone is allowed to remain in possession of the student, provided that it is powered off and stored in the student's bookbag. Refusal to comply with the policy while in the ISS setting will result in an out-of-suspension.

Third Violation – when an administrator determines that a student has been assessed a third violation, the student will be placed in in-school suspension for the equivalent of a full day; the student will be asked to place the cell phone in bank bag with a lock during the time in which the student is in ISS. The bag will remain in the possession of the student, and phone will be removed from the bank bag and returned to the student when the student exits ISS. If the student refuses to comply, he or she will be given a full-day of out-of-school suspension.

Subsequent Violations – when students continue to violate the cell phone policy, they will be suspended from school, and their parents/guardians may be required to attend a conference with school administrators to develop strategies to promote compliance with the policy.

#### Exceptions

Smart Watches – Students may wear smart watches during the school day as long as the watches are not functioning as communication devices or unauthorized academic aids. Watches are to remain silent and have notifications disabled during the school day. Using a smart watch to send messages, record audio without authorization, or gain assistance on an academic task without permission will be considered a violation of the cell phone policy. Watches that create a distraction by making sounds or emitting lights will similarly cause violations of the policy. If a watch causes a cell phone policy violation, the student will be asked to put the watch in airplane mode, turn off all notifications, and place the watch in his or her bookbag for the remainder of the school day.

Medical Needs – Students who have a severe, diagnosed medical need must consult with the school nurse to determine whether the student's medical plan should allow the student to have greater access to his or her cell phone during the school day.

Effective January 13, 2025.