

## **Students 166- Student use of Personal Communication Devices on School Property**

### **A. Purpose**

The Manchester School District is committed to providing students with a learning environment free from disruptions. The use of Personal Communication Devices (cell phones, tablets, laptops, other communication devices, smartwatches, etc.) for unauthorized purposes can lead to disruptions in the learning environment.

For the purposes of this policy, "Personal Communication Devices" are defined as any non-district owned/provided internet/cellular-capable device that can support voice or video calls, texts, emails, or instant messages. Personal Communication Devices include, but are not limited to, cellphones, tablets, laptops, and smartwatches. The term Personal Communication Devices shall not be construed to include devices provided/owned/authorized by the district for instructional purposes such as Chromebooks, laptops or other District owned electronic equipment/devices.

### **B. Restrictions**

The unauthorized use of Personal Communication Devices by students is strictly prohibited from when the first bell rings signaling the start of instructional time until the dismissal bell rings to end the academic school day (referred to as "the school day"). The school day includes lunch periods, homeroom, study halls, recess, passing time or any other period, block or classroom time that occurs after the bell signaling the start of instruction and prior to dismissal. Notwithstanding, Personal Communication Devices (or any other device with photographic or recording capabilities) shall not, regardless of the time of day, be used to record audio or video media or take pictures of any student or staff member without their permission. Further, Personal Communication Devices shall not be used in locker rooms, bathrooms, or any other location where such use could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy. Students are cautioned that recording or taking pictures of another person with a Personal Communication Device without that person's permission including the posting, sharing or the dissemination of such recordings/pictures, are a violation of this policy and may constitute a crime pursuant to RSA Chapter 570-A.

Students participating in extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, clubs, field trips or other activities that occur outside of the school day shall abide by the rules and consequences established for the use of Personal Communication Devices set by the teacher, coach, advisor, instructor, sponsor or other designated supervisor for the activity.

While it is best practice that these Personal Communication Devices are not brought to school, if these devices are they shall be kept with the power turned off in a student's

assigned locker, backpack, or handbag. The district shall not be responsible for the loss, damage or theft of any Personal Communication Device brought to the school.

### **C. Exceptions**

Students with medical needs, such as insulin pumps and glucose sensors, or disabilities that require a device to support their learning as identified by their individualized education program (IEP) or plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. section 794, or a multilingual student with appropriate language access programs and services pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 shall be exempt from this policy. In such cases, the use of the device shall be limited to the purpose for which the exemption was granted, i.e., to monitor glucose levels etc. Additionally, the superintendent or their designee may approve additional exceptions on a case-by-case basis or through an administrative decision recorded in the student handbook, with respect to student medical, disability, or language proficiency needs. Students that are exempt from such policy will have their names placed on a Master List at the central office of the assigned school which shall indicate the permitted use of the Personal Communication Device.

### **D. Consequences and Violations**

Disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy will be imposed pursuant to the Manchester School District Student Code of Conduct, which shall require:

1. First Offense: Warning and confiscation of the Personal Communication Device for the remainder of the school day.
2. Second Offense: The Personal Communication Device will be confiscated. A disciplinary referral will be written. The student's parent/guardian must pick up the device from the principal or superintendent's office.
3. Third Offense: The Personal Communication Device will be confiscated. A disciplinary referral will be written. The parent/guardian must pick up the device from the principal or superintendent's office. Each school day thereafter the student must drop off the device at the principal's office upon arrival and pick up the device at the end of the school day. Failure to drop off the phone at the office as directed shall result in detention and/or suspension from school.
4. Audio/video recordings made without consent of another person, including the posting, sharing or dissemination thereof, particularly when such recordings violate another person's reasonable expectations of privacy, may result in referral to law enforcement and/or additional disciplinary measures including expulsion from school.

## **E. Enforcement**

Any teacher who witnesses a violation of this policy shall request that the student turn over the Personal Communication Device to the teacher. If the student refuses or otherwise fails to surrender the Personal Communication Device to the teacher, the building principal or designee shall be notified who shall require the student to surrender the Personal Communication Device. Students who refuse to comply with any request made by a teacher or principal/designee to surrender a Personal Communication Device shall be subject to discipline including being sent home, detention and/or suspension from school. Surrendering a "burner phone" instead of the actual or primary Personal Communication Device shall be deemed a refusal to comply with a request to surrender a Personal Communication Device.

Any teacher who takes into custody a Personal Communication Device shall safeguard it until it can be securely turned over to the Central Office, building principal or designee. The building principal or designee shall be responsible for developing internal procedures for identifying students who have been granted an exception under Section C of this policy, keeping track of the number of violations, and safeguarding Personal Communication Devices that have been confiscated. Students will be advised how and when any confiscated Personal Communication Device may be retrieved.

The school reserves the right to monitor, inspect, copy, and review a student's personal electronic device subject to the limitations of RSA 189:70, if there is reasonable suspicion to believe that a student has violated board policies, regulations, school rules, or has engaged in other misconduct while using their Personal Communication Device.

## **F. Review**

The Superintendent shall annually review this policy in collaboration with parent(s), students and teachers with a report and recommendations for policy changes to be delivered to the Board as may be reasonably necessary.

## **G. Publication**

The Superintendent shall ensure that information regarding the prohibition against using personal communication devices during the school day is included in all student handbooks and included in "beginning of school year" materials provided to parents/guardians.

*Legal Reference: NH RSA 189:1-a, V, enacted July 1, 2025.*