

## **New Policy Proposal**

**Students**

**JICB**

### **JICB – Student Use of Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices**

The Newport News School Board supports cell-phone free education by ensuring that the use of cell phones and personal electronic communication devices does not interfere with teaching and learning or with maintaining a safe and orderly environment during the school day. It will be the policy of the Newport News School Board to restrict the use of cell phones and personal electronic devices from the opening bell-to-dismissal bell in elementary and middle schools and opening bell-to-dismissal bell in high schools with the exception of lunch periods.

#### **Basic Definitions**

“Cell Phone” means a person device capable of making calls, transmitting pictures or video, or sending or receiving messages through electronic means. The definition of 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, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

“Personal Electronic Communication Devices” means any personal device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, or a cellular or Wi-Fi network. Personal electronic communication devices may include wearable devices such as smartwatches, as well as personal headphones, earbuds, laptops, tablets, and other future electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

#### **Procedures to be Adopted by the Superintendent**

The Superintendent is hereby directed to develop procedures to implement this policy decision. The procedures will conform to the following:

1. Be age appropriate; and
2. Include exceptions to include those applicable to 504 plans, Individual Education Plan or IEP’s, Individual Health Plans and Limited English Proficiency Plans.

## **Procedures: Student Use of Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Communication Devices**

These Procedures implement the Policy requirements approved by the School Board related to students' use of cell phones and personal electronic communications devices. The School Board has determined that restrictions on cell phone access and personal electronic communications devices use will be implemented in the Newport News Public Schools. The restrictions are intended to facilitate cell phone free education. Definitions, use restrictions, and other matters are set forth below.

### **Definitions**

“Bell-to-Bell” means from the opening school bell to the dismissal bell in elementary and middle schools and the opening bell to dismissal bell in high schools with the exception of lunch 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 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, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

“Cell phone-free” education includes restrictions or elimination of cell phones during “instructional time.”

“Individualized Health Care Plan” means a plan developed collaboratively with school nurses, school staff, student healthcare providers and parents/guardians to address a student’s unique health care status.

“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 academic school day.

“Personal Electronic Communication Device” means any personal device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, or a cellular or Wi-Fi network. Personal electronic communication devices may include wearable devices such as smartwatches, as well as personal headphones, earbuds, and other future personal electronic communication devices with the abovementioned characteristics.

## **New DRAFT Procedure**

“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. The storage option for NNPS students will be in the student’s backpack or in locker rooms for afterschool athletic programs.

### **Implementation of Cell Phone Restrictions**

Use of cell phones is intended to conform to developmentally appropriate expectations at elementary (K-5), middle (6-8), and high (9-12) schools.

#### **Elementary Schools**

In elementary schools (K-5), cell phone-free education means that elementary students will not use cell phones and personal electronic communication devices from the opening bell to the dismissal bell during the school day.

- 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.
- Students must use school-based communication tools and platforms (whether in the office, classroom, or other centralized location) to communicate non-emergency needs with parents.
- Parents and educators will use school-based communication tools and channels to communicate emergencies and non-emergencies during bell-to-bell instructional time.
- A school official should be available to support a student in the event of communication involving a family emergency.
- Elementary students will not use cell phones or personal electronic communications devices at off-site events or activities, including all school-sponsored events and/or field trips, multiple instructional settings, and other non-building specific instructional opportunities that do not occur on the elementary school campus.
- Elementary students may use cell phones or personal electronic devices afterschool under the supervision of the teacher or activity sponsor.

#### **Middle Schools**

In middle schools (Grade 6-8), cell phone-free education means middle school students will not have a cell phone or personal electronic communication device from the opening bell to the dismissal bell during the school day.

## **New DRAFT Procedure**

- If cell phones or personal electronic communication devices are brought to school, they must be stored and turned off during the bell-to-bell school day.
- For time periods outside of the bell-to-bell school day, middle school students may use cell phones, and personal electronic communication devices before and after school, on school buses, within the school building, and on school grounds.
- Middle school students may use cell phones and personal electronic devices during afterschool activities including off-site, school-sponsored, and athletic events.
- Students must use school-based communication tools and platforms (whether in the office, classroom, or other centralized location) to communicate non-emergency needs with parents.
- Parents should use school-based communication tools and channels to communicate emergencies and non-emergencies. A school official will be available to support the student in the event of communication involving a family emergency.
- Educators and all co-curricular and extracurricular sponsors must use a non-social media-based app for communications with students regarding activity and athletic scheduling information during school hours.
- Schools should give middle school students developmentally appropriate guidance and support on the appropriate use of school-issued technology devices, educational apps, and educational tools for academic (both classroom and homework assignments) and educational research purposes.
- If a middle school student travels to a different campus during the school day, they must adhere to that school building's policy and procedures for cell phones and personal electronic communication devices.

### **High Schools**

In high schools (Grade 9-12), cell phone-free education means that high school students will not have a cell phone or personal electronic communication device from the opening bell to the dismissal bell during the day, with the exception of lunch periods.

- If cell phones or personal electronic communication devices are brought to school, they must be stored and turned off during the bell-to-bell school day.
- Outside of the bell-to-bell instructional time (with the exception of lunch periods), cell phones and personal electronic communication devices may be used on a high school campus before or after school.
- High school students may use cell phones and personal electronic devices during afterschool activities including off-site, school-sponsored, and athletic events.

## **New DRAFT Procedure**

- During bell-to-bell instructional time, students must use school-based communication tools and platforms (whether in the office, classroom, or other centralized location) to communicate non-emergency needs with parents.
- Parents should use school-based communication tools and channels to communicate emergencies during bell-to-bell instructional time.
- Educators and all co-curricular and extracurricular sponsors must use non-social media-based apps to communicate activity and athletic scheduling information with students during school hours.
- Schools will provide high school students with developmentally appropriate guidance and support on the appropriate use of school-issued technology devices, educational apps, and educational tools for academic (both classroom and homework assignments) and educational research purposes.
- If a high school student travels to a different campus or facility during the school day, they must adhere to that building's policy and procedures for cell phones and personal electronic communication devices.

### **Exceptions**

The School Board understands the need to create flexibility and communication processes for students who may require exceptions due to various individualized and unique needs. The exemptions are limited to provisions specifically included in a student's IEP, 504 Plan, Individualized Health Care Plan or Limited English Proficiency plan.