

CELL PHONES/PAGING DEVICES

Possession/Use of Paging Devices and Cell Phones: South Carolina law and School District policy define a *paging device* as “a telecommunications device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor”. This definition includes cell phones. The law provides that each school district shall have a policy which addresses possession of such devices by any student.

The policy of this District, as set forth in Policy JICJ and/or amended in this Code may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Cell phones are not permitted in elementary schools except by prior permission of the principal for special circumstances.
- 2) Cell phones, pagers, or other communication devices may not be used or activated during the school day. [Note: Students attending a school piloting a BYOD project are waived from certain prohibitions otherwise set forth in policy JICJ and this Code, but use as a phone or unauthorized camera remains strictly prohibited, as for all students.] Devices described in this policy shall not be activated, used, or displayed by students while in school buildings or on school grounds during “school day hours” and while attending school-day activities, whether on or off school property. Such devices will not be activated during school bus rides to and from school unless specifically authorized by the driver.
- 3) Cell phones and pagers are permitted at athletic contests or other events occurring during non-school hours.
- 4) Other personal electronic devices which have wireless or cellular interface capability to the internet and/or which have the capability of capturing, storing, or transferring text, numeric, or visual images (including digital or conventional cameras) are subject to all rules relating to cell phones unless otherwise authorized by prior permission of a teacher or administrator.

A student needing a cell phone, pager or any device may be exempted from the prohibitions of the policy for documented medical needs, physical or academic accommodations, or other legitimate reasons as approved in writing by the school.

Violations during the instructional day are described as: Any intentional manipulation or **use of the device** by a student. Any violations involving other violations of the Code of Conduct may result in more severe consequences. [**Note: Utilization of such device in a restroom, even on first offense, will be subject to loss of privileges for the remainder of the year and at least a three-day suspension.**] Phones confiscated for violations of policy must be made available to parent(s) as soon as the device is no longer required as evidence.

Discipline consequences are as follow:

Activation and/or any use during school hours (without permission) is still a violation of the Code of Conduct.

Any unauthorized activation or use gives staff a reasonable basis to take the phone for the balance of the day (at a minimum) and to view the last activity including texts or browser visits to see if there has been a related disciplinary violation [such as cheating; taking pictures; inappropriate website visits; etc.] with reference being made to Item III (D) of the Code of Conduct.

1. Unauthorized activation with no related infraction would result in staff confiscating the phone for the remainder of the day and a warning being issued.
2. Second unauthorized activation with no related infraction would result in loss of privilege for ten school days and further warning.
3. Third unauthorized activation with no related infraction would result in loss of privilege for twenty school days, or remainder of the year, whichever is longer and at least one day of suspension (ISS or OSS).
4. Unauthorized use with related disciplinary infraction would result in three days minimum OSS up to an expulsion recommendation, depending on the nature of the related violation.