



STUDENTS: Conduct

Use of Personal Electronic Communication Devices by Students

I. Purpose

- A. To implement Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) Policy 5552 by establishing guidelines for the use of personal electronic communication devices by students.
- B. This rule further establishes disciplinary procedures for violations of Board Policy 5552 and this accompanying rule.

II. Definitions

- A. *Instructional Day* – The time that the student comes onto school grounds until the time the student leaves school grounds. Instructional day also includes the instructional times for students attending extended day and extended year instructional programs.
- B. *Portable Electronic Communication Device (PECD)* – Any non-Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) issued electronic communication device used to send or receive data via voice, video or text. Examples include but are not limited to: Cell/mobile/Smart phones, Smart watches, tablets, personal computers or other devices equipped with microphones, speakers and/or cameras carried, worn or transported by an individual to receive, communicate or record voice, data, image and/or text content.
- C. *School Administrator* – School principal or in the absence of the principal, the administrator designated by the principal.
- D. *School Property* – Any Board-owned, controlled or leased property or vehicle, regardless of whether students are present.
- E. *School-sponsored Activity* – An activity that is sponsored, approved, conducted, planned and/or supervised by school staff regardless of whether the activity takes place on or off school property or occurs during regular instructional hours.

- F. *Use* – For the purpose of this policy, use means being in the possession of a portable electronic communication devices, which is not powered off or set on silent mode and that is visible to others.

III. Guidelines

- A. Students shall use their PECD in a manner that is responsible, legal and appropriate.
- B. When utilizing the Internet and the BCPS network, students shall adhere to the provisions of this rule and the standards of conduct established in Board Policy and Superintendent's rule 6202, *Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP) for Students*.
- C. In accordance with Board Policy 5552, the use of portable electronic communication devices (PECDs) during instructional time is prohibited, except as provided in subparagraphs III(D) and III(E) below. A student's PECD shall be turned off or set on silent mode and out of sight. The use of ear buds/headphones is prohibited during all such times.
- D. In accordance with Board Policy 5552, students may possess their PECD on school property and during school-sponsored activities; however, students may not use their PECD until the end of the instructional day with the following exceptions:
 - 1. When instructional staff, in Grade 3 and above, has permitted such use for instructional purposes during instructional time;
 - 2. High school students may use their PECD during student lunch periods; and
 - 3. Middle school students may use their PECD during student lunch periods, as determined by the school administrator of each individual middle school.
- E. School administrators may use their discretion to permit the use of a PECD in certain areas of the school, during certain portions of the school day and/or designate areas of the school where a PECD may not be used.
- F. During times when the use of a PECD is permitted, students must wear earbuds/headphones if sound is being emitted, unless otherwise authorized by instructional staff or a school administrator.

- G. Students may use their PECD while being transported on school buses, as long as such use does not impact the safe operation of the bus, as Deemed by the bus driver, bus attendant and/or school administrator.

IV. Compliance

- A. In accordance with Board Policy 5580, *Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation*, and Board Policy 6202, *Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP) for Students*, information may not be communicated using a PECD if it:
 - 1. Violates the privacy of others;
 - 2. Jeopardizes the health or safety of students;
 - 3. Is abusive, harassing, bullying, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, threatening, discriminatory or illegal;
 - 4. Causes disruption of school activities; or
 - 5. Plagiarizes the work of others.
- B. A student's PECD shall be turned off and out of sight during all assessments.

V. Notifications

Annually, the school administrator shall provide notice of Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5552 to all students, parents and staff.

VI. Violations

- A. An administrator will investigate any alleged violation of Board Policy 5552 and this rule.
- B. In accordance with Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 6202, BCPS reserves the right to monitor and investigate a PECD and activities on the BCPS network.
- C. School administrators may temporarily suspend the use of a PECD on school property if the device is used in a manner inconsistent with this or other Board policies, Superintendent's rules and/or school procedures.
- D. If a violation has been found, students will be disciplined in accordance with Board Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5550, *Student Behavior Code*.

- E. Nothing in this paragraph shall preclude a school administrator from confiscating a PECD if used in an illegal manner, used in a manner that creates a chronic and extreme disruption in the educational program or in a manner that is a threat to the safety and health of others.
1. If a PECD is confiscated by a school administrator, the PECD may be turned over to the police or other appropriate agency; or, when appropriate, returned to the student's parent/guardian or the student.
 2. In accordance with Policy 5570, if a PECD is confiscated, a picture or photocopy of the PECD shall be maintained by the school administrator. Every attempt will be made to return the PECD to parent/guardian or student as quickly as possible.

VII. Responsibility/Liability

Students assume full responsibility for their PECD. The Board is not responsible for the theft, damage, loss, unauthorized use, destruction or data fees of any PECD brought to school by a student.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article, § 7-305, *Suspension and Expulsion Procedures*
COMAR 13.A.08.01.11, *Disciplinary Actions*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5500, *Code of Student Conduct*
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Student Behavior Code*
Board of Education Policy 5560, *Suspensions and Expulsions*
Board of Education Policy 5570, *Searches*
Board of Education Policy 5580, *Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment or Intimidation*
Board of Education Policy 5600, *Students' Responsibilities and Rights*
Board of Education Policy 6202, *Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP) for Students*

Related Rule: Superintendent's Rule 5550, *Student Behavior Code*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

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