

~ POSSESSION/USE OF PAGING DEVICES, CELL PHONES & OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ~

Definitions for the purpose of this policy

- ✓ A paging device is defined in South Carolina law as a telecommunications device, to include a mobile telephone (cell phone) that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor.
- ✓ A cell phone, while included in the general definition of a paging device, also includes any digital or analog portable communication device or multi-function device that has two-way communication capability (whether aural, visual or a combination thereof) and operates through a cellular telecommunication system, a global satellite system or an AM or FM two-way radio system.
- ✓ A personal electronic device includes any digital or analog portable electronic device that can capture, store or transfer visual images such as a personal data assistant (PDA), Blackberry, laptop computer or mini-computer, with or without wireless (WiFi) or cellular interface capability, and digital (or film-type) camera, but does not include a calculator or device utilized strictly for computational purposes.
- ✓ A violation is the personal possession on school grounds of any paging device or cell phone, except as authorized by this policy, or the possession of any other personal electronic device in violation of this policy.

The Aiken County Board of Education has allowed possession (but not use) of personal telecommunications devices by students in order to reflect societal trends and a relaxation in state law. However, the board of education finds that the use of personal communication devices by students during the school day, as facilitated by, but in violation of the possession only policy has had an adverse effect on classroom instruction, student punctuality, test security, personal student privacy, the ability of school officials to maintain discipline, generally, and to maintain order during times of emergency. Therefore this policy is intended to set forth the specific circumstances under which a student may bring a paging device and/or cell phone onto school grounds and to establish clearly the consequences for violations.

- Middle and high school students may bring a paging device or cell phone onto school grounds provided that such device is left in an automobile or stored immediately upon coming into the school building in the student's locker or other place provided and designated by the principal for secure storage. This rule applies during the school day hours and at off-campus activities during the school day hours. Cell phones will not be activated during school bus rides to and from school unless specifically authorized by the driver for special circumstances.
- Elementary school students may not bring a paging device or cell phone to school. (A principal may approve an occasional exception by prior written permission.)
- No other personal electronic device will be brought upon school premises (unless with the prior permission of the teacher or a school administrator).
- Cell phones or paging devices are permitted at school events during non-school hours.
- A first violation will result in a device otherwise permitted under this policy being taken by the school administrator and turned over to the student's parent/legal guardian as soon as possible. It will result in a minimum one day in-school suspension (or its suspension equivalent). Loss of the privilege will be invoked for 10 school days after the violation and the parent/legal guardian and student must sign a "Condition for Return" acknowledgement and agreement before being able to bring a cell phone or pager back on the school campus.
- A second violation will result in a minimum three-day in-school suspension (or its suspension equivalent) and a one-month (20 school day) loss of the privilege.
- A third violation will result in an out-of-school suspension and loss of the privilege for the remainder of the school year.
- A fourth violation will result in an expulsion recommendation
- Should any active violation also involve other violations of the code of student conduct (such as cheating, invasions of personal privacy, etc.), more serious disciplinary consequences may be imposed as appropriate to the gravity of the violation.
- A student needing a paging device or cell phone for a documented temporary or permanent medical need or accommodation or for volunteer service on a fire or emergency services team (for 18 year-old students or younger students who are interns in such programs and demonstrate that possession of such device is necessary to fulfilling his/her program requirements) may be exempted from the prohibition of this policy as approved in writing by the principal.

JICJ Adopted 5/22/07; Revised 8/11/09