

**TALBOT COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MD 21601**

**POLICY CODE: 10.19 AR
REVISED: 08/19/09
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POSSESSION OF PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES ON SCHOOLS PROPERTY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of these administrative regulations is to outline procedures for ensuring that portable communication devices do not disrupt the learning environment in Talbot County Schools.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Portable Communication Device - any device carried, worn, or transported by an individual to receive or communicate messages. Such devices may include but are not limited to:

1. Portable pagers
2. Hand held radios
3. Cellular phones
4. Any personal communication device which has the capability to take photographs of any kind and/or provides for a wireless, unfiltered connection to the internet.

This definition includes any new technology developed for similar purposes.

B. School Property - any property or building owned and operated by Talbot County Public Schools. This included school buses.

III. STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES PK - 5

Students may possess portable communication devices during the school day in accordance with the following regulations:

- A. Prior to entering the school building, the portable communication device must be turned off during school hours.
- B. All portable communication devices must be stored out of sight and may not be used during any time of the school day.
- C. During regular bus transportation to and from school, students may possess communication devices, but the devices must be stored away and turned off.

- D. Any staff member or student having knowledge or reasonable suspicion of unauthorized possession or use of a portable communication device by a student on Talbot County Public School property shall promptly report this information to the Principal/designee.
- E. Under no circumstances are students permitted to use portable communication devices on Talbot County Public Schools property or Talbot County Public Schools sponsored-activities or events in order to transmit any text or images that are obscene, pornographic, illegal, profane, violate academic policies, or invade another's privacy. This includes "sexting" (the sharing of explicit or otherwise sexually provocative photos).
- F. Students are responsible for keeping their portable communication devices secure. Talbot County Public Schools is not responsible for the loss of any student's portable communication devices.

IV. STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6 - 8

Students may possess portable communication devices during the school day in accordance with the following regulations:

- A. Prior to entering the school building, the portable communication device must be turned off during school hours.
- B. All portable communication devices must be stored out of sight and may not be used during any time of the school day.
- C. Students may not use earbuds or headphones with their portable devices during the school day.
- D. During regular bus transportation to and from school, students may possess and use portable communication devices, but the devices must be turned off or silenced. Headphones and earbuds are permitted.
- E. Students participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics, clubs, drama, etc. may possess and use portable communication devices on school property after regular instructional hours.
- F. Any staff member or student having knowledge or reasonable suspicion of unauthorized possession or use of a portable communication device by a student on Talbot County Public School property shall promptly report this information to the Principal/designee.

- G. Under no circumstances are students permitted to use portable communication devices on Talbot County Public Schools property or Talbot County Public Schools sponsored-activities or events in order to transmit any text or images that are obscene, pornographic, illegal, profane, violate academic policies, or invade another's privacy. This includes "sexting" (the sharing of explicit or otherwise sexually provocative photos).
- H. Students are responsible for keeping their portable communication devices secure. Talbot County Public Schools is not responsible for the loss of any student's portable communication devices.

V. STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 9 - 12

Students may possess portable communication devices during the school day in accordance with the following regulations:

- A. Prior to entering the school building, the portable communication device must be turned off or silenced during school hours.
- B. All portable communication devices must be turned off, stored out of sight, and may not be used during any instructional time.
- C. Students may not use earbuds or headphones with their portable devices during the school day.
- D. Students may only use their portable communication devices during class change and lunch, and the device must be in silent mode.
- E. During regular bus transportation to and from school, students may possess and use portable communication devices, but the devices must be turned off or silenced. Headphones and earbuds are permitted.
- F. During bus transportation to and from athletic events or other school-sponsored events, students may possess and use cell phones, but the devices must be silenced. Headphones and earbuds are permitted.
- G. Students participating in extracurricular activities such as athletics, clubs, drama, etc. may possess and use portable communication devices on school property after regular instructional hours.
- H. Any staff member or student having knowledge or reasonable suspicion of unauthorized use of a portable communication device by a student on Talbot County Public School property shall promptly report this information to the Principal/designee.

- I. Under no circumstances are students permitted to use portable communication devices on Talbot County Public Schools property or Talbot County Public Schools sponsored-activities or events in order to transmit any text or images that are obscene, pornographic, illegal, profane, violate academic policies, or invade another's privacy. This includes "sexting" (the sharing of explicit or otherwise sexually provocative photos).
- J. Students are responsible for keeping their portable communication devices secure. Talbot County Public Schools is not responsible for the loss of any student's portable communication devices.

VI. EXEMPTIONS

- A. Exemptions with the permission of the principal:
 - 1. Students with a documented disability using activated portable communication devices for learning reasons as outlined in a formal plan or students with a documented medical condition using portable communication devices for learning reasons as verified to be needed by an attending physician. Members of any volunteer fire department, ambulance company or rescue squad, who are designated to possess an activated portable communication device on public school property by the chief of the volunteer fire department, ambulance company or rescue squad

VII. RESPONSIBILITY/LIABILITY

Talbot County Public Schools will assume no responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage or destruction of any portable communication devices.

VIII. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. It is the responsibility of all administrators and school staff to enforce these standards with all students in all schools. Enforcement of these standards shall be equitable and consistent regardless of a student's race, color, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religion, socio-economic status, or disabling condition.
- B. Implementation of these standards shall minimize interruption to instruction. If a student fails to observe these standards, a staff member or administrator shall discretely and respectfully request that the student store and/or silence their portable communication device. This communication shall avoid drawing undue attention to the student.

- C. If a student needs to store and/or silence their portable communication device, it shall be done in a manner that has a minimal impact on their learning.
- D. In the event that the student refuses to store and/or silence their portable communication device, the student will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Talbot County Code of Conduct (Policy 10.14).

IX. COMMUNICATION

- A. The standards outlined in these Administrative Regulations shall be communicated to students and parents/guardians on an annual basis. This communication shall be done in writing and verbally through methods that may include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. Student handbook
 - 2. Grade level or classroom meetings
 - 3. School newsletter
 - 4. New school orientation
 - 5. Back to school meetings
 - 6. Summer mailings
 - 7. County and/or school websites
 - 8. County and/or school social media
- B. If a student is disciplined for failure to observe these standards, an administrator shall review the standards during a conference with the student and the parents/guardians.
- C. In the event that a student's violation of these regulations simultaneously violate any other Board policy, the administrator shall follow the regulations of both policies and respond according to the Talbot County Public Schools Code of Conduct.