

Hillsborough County Public Schools

Policy Manual

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5136 - Wireless Communication and Other Electronic Devices

The use of wireless communication devices is always prohibited during the instructional day, unless expressly directed by a teacher, staff, and/or administrative staff. Wireless communication devices (WCD) will remain on silent in the student's backpack, lunchbox, purse, pocket, or out of sight while the student is on school property or in attendance at a school function. Use of a device is restricted to before school and after school. Students in high school may use phones during lunch. In elementary and middle schools, cell phones may only be used during lunch with the express permission of the school's principal. A school principal may impose more restrictive conditions at their school.

Violations of the cell phone policy will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may result in confiscation of said device. If the WCD is used in a criminal act (such as sexting, as outlined in Florida Statutes and the Student Code of Conduct), the cell phone will be provided to law enforcement and the student may face criminal penalties.

Students may not receive discipline if they use their cellphone and/or ancillary device(s) to monitor a health condition that is documented through medical records provided to the school including, but not limited to, an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, or a Health Plan.

At no time shall Hillsborough County Public Schools be responsible for theft, loss or damage to cell phones or other electronic devices brought onto its property.

Students shall not operate a motor vehicle owned or leased by the district on or off school property, or personal motor vehicle on district property, while manually typing into a personal communication device or while sending or reading messages on such a device, for the purpose of non-voice interpersonal communication, including, but not limited to, communication methods known as texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, including Snapchat, and any forms of social media.

The use of WCDs that contain built-in cameras (i.e., devices that take still or motion pictures, whether in a digital or other format) is prohibited in locker rooms, shower facilities, and/or rest/bathrooms. Furthermore, students are prohibited from using WCDs to take unauthorized photographs or videos involving students and/or staff and posting those online or on social media platforms.

Students shall have no expectation of confidentiality with respect to their use of WCDs on school premises/property. Students may not use a WCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened, humiliated, harassed, embarrassed or intimidated. In particular, students are prohibited from using WCDs to: (1) transmit material that is threatening, obscene, disruptive, or sexually explicit or that can be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based upon their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, ancestry, or political beliefs; and (2) engage in 'sexting' - i.e., sending, receiving, sharing, viewing or possessing pictures, text messages, e-mails or other materials of a sexual nature in electronic or any other form.

Students are also prohibited from using a WCD to capture, record and/or transmit test information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty. Likewise, students are prohibited from using WCDs to receive such information. Students must adhere to any additional restrictions imposed within a testing environment regarding the use and/or possession of WCDs during testing.

In an emergency situation, all WCDs must be placed in silent mode.

Definitions:

"Wireless communication device" (WCD) includes peripheral devices that have a wired or wireless connection (e.g., smart phones, headphones, earbuds, two-way messaging devices, smart watches and electronic gaming devices, etc.).

"Sexting" is the knowing transmission or distribution to another minor by a computer or similar device any photograph or video of any person that depicts nudity and is harmful to minors. Sexting also includes possession of a photo of any person that was transmitted or distributed by another minor that depicts nudity. Such conduct not only is potentially dangerous for the involved students, but also can lead to unwanted exposure of the messages and images to others and could result in criminal violations related to the transmission or possession of child pornography. Such conduct will be subject to discipline and confiscation of the WCD and referral to law enforcement.

F.S. 1006.07(2)(f)

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