

## CELL PHONES IN SCHOOL

### Generally

The Westmoreland County School Board recognizes that student access to cell phones and other electronic devices is common in current society; however, it is imperative that students, parents, and staff understand that there are appropriate and inappropriate times for the use of such devices. Schools must provide a learning environment free of unnecessary distraction and disruption. The Westmoreland County School Board sets forth expectations for student conduct so that public education is conducted in an atmosphere free of disruption and threat to persons or property and supportive of individual rights.

### Expectations for Students

The use of cell phones (and all other personal electronic devices including headphones, earbuds, smart watches, and other Bluetooth enabled devices) is strictly prohibited during the regular school day. Upon arrival to school, and continuing through dismissal from school, cell phones (and other electronic devices) are required to be out of visible sight and either silenced or powered off. Cell phones (and other electronic devices) may not be in a pocket, or in a mesh side pocket, but instead must be placed out of sight in a backpack or other personal bag. Failure to comply with this expectation will result in the following actions:

<b>Consequences</b>	
<b>First Offense</b>	Parent/guardian contacted, verbal warning, and the device will be confiscated until the end of the school day.
<b>Second Offense</b>	Parent/guardian contacted, the device will be confiscated, and the parent/guardian must come retrieve the device.
<b>Third Offense</b>	Parent/guardian contacted, the device will be confiscated, and the parent/guardian must come retrieve the device. In addition, for a period of 30 calendar days, the student shall be banned from possessing a cell phone or electronic device at school during instructional hours. The student will be required to check their device into the office at arrival, and retrieve it following dismissal.

Cell phones and other electronic devices may be used when students are attending non-instructional after-school events/activities.

Cell phones and other electronic devices may be used when students are riding the school buses, so long as such use is not distracting or disruptive. Students must use earbuds or headphones when listening to music or watching videos with sound.

## Parental Involvement and Responsibility

Each parent of a student enrolled in Westmoreland County Public Schools has a duty to assist in enforcing this policy, along with the Standards of Student Conduct.

## Expectations for Teachers and Other School Personnel

Teachers and other school personnel are expected to strictly enforce this policy, so that students experience consistent expectations and consequences in all school settings.

Teachers and other school personnel who confiscate devices must store the device in a safe place until the first available opportunity to turn it over to the school principal or assistant principal for safe keeping and documentation. Cell phones or electronic devices will remain in storage until retrieved by the parent/guardian. Confiscated devices may be retrieved during normal school office hours or at specific times designated by the principal or principal's designee.

Teachers and other school personnel are prohibited from using cell phones and other electronic devices during scheduled class time or other times when personnel are responsible for the instruction and/or direct supervision of students. Teachers and other school personnel may use cell phones when on break or during planning time.

## Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is strictly prohibited:

- 1) Using cell phones or other electronic devices to:
  - a. Bully, intimidate, threaten, or harass another individual.
  - b. Collaborate with, encourage, or incite others to participate in violent or unlawful acts on school property or at school-sponsored activities.
  - c. Create, possess, exchange, distribute, post, or transmit any photograph, digitized image, or video of a person in any condition of nudity, or a person engaged in any sexual act.
  - d. Engage in academic dishonesty or cheating.
- 2) Refusing to surrender a cell phone or other electronic device when directed to do so by school personnel.

Students engaging in such conduct are subject to disciplinary action. At a minimum, the cell phone or other electronic device will be confiscated and used as evidence, and the student will be banned from possessing a cell phone or electronic device at school for the remainder of the school year. Other consequences, including short or long-term suspension or expulsion, may apply based on the outcome of the investigation.

Adopted: October 17, 2022 (effective January 5, 2023)