

## Students

### Activities

#### Possession of a Personal Electronic Device

Personal electronic devices, such as: cellular phone, personal digital assistant, personal music/video/gaming device, cameras, or other personal electronic devices with communications functions or the capability to capture/record voice or image information continue to evolve and have become a staple of our society and our ability and interest in staying connected to each other. While the benefits of electronic devices are evident to most people their uses in certain settings, particularly schools, have also been problematic at times.

The Watertown Unified School District acknowledges that personal electronic devices are a part of our society, have a benefit to individuals, and can at times provide opportunities for learning. At the same time it is understood that the improper and inappropriate use of electronic devices constitutes behavior that is unacceptable in a school setting.

The Watertown Unified School District Board of Education accepts the ethical and appropriate use of electronic devices in a school setting when it furthers the educational purpose of the school and specific learning applications in classrooms. The Board further finds that the improper and inappropriate use of electronic devices during the school day, or during school sponsored activities, that are not directly related to teaching and learning and are not specifically authorized by a district staff member for an educational purpose are prohibited.

Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to: texting messages during class time; cyber bullying; photographing or videotaping individuals without their knowledge and permission; harassing others with unwanted phone calls and messages; disseminating, transferring, or sharing inappropriate or illegal images or photographs; and using devices while in class that are not part of the lesson and without the permission of the instructor.

Building principals are authorized to establish school rules and acceptable use guidelines for limited, non-disruptive use of electronic devices during the school day in the school building or during school activities for safety, medical, vocational or other legitimate reasons.

1. Students are permitted to possess a cellular phone, personal digital assistant, personal music/video/gaming device, camera, or other personal electronic device with communications functions or the capability to capture/record voice or image information (collectively within this policy, “device” or “devices”), provided that the device remains stored, powered off, and unused (1) during the school day unless authorized by the principal or classroom teacher, and (2) at all times in any school bathroom, locker room, or other dressing area. An electronic device shall be considered stored if it is outside of view and reasonably secured in a locker, backpack/purse, or pocket. Headphones, ear pieces, or similar equipment associated with a device shall also be stored and not worn.

2. Any student who possesses or uses a device and/or associated equipment that is not stored, that is not powered off, or in a manner that violates this Board policy or any other policy or school rule shall be subject to consequences, including, but not necessarily limited to, disciplinary action, required surrender of the device, and/or potentially having his/her right to possess a device at school further restricted by the school principal or his/her designee. In any case where a device is confiscated by a school official, the device shall be returned to the student or to a parent/guardian at an appropriate time.
3. Students engaging in the inappropriate use of electronic communication devices while on school premises or participating in school activities are subject to disciplinary action. The inappropriate use of such devices by students while off campus and not engaging in school activities may also be subject to disciplinary action if such conduct endangers the health, safety or property of others at school or under the supervision of school authorities and/or causes a material and substantial disruption to the school environment or school activities.
4. Students who possess a device do so at their own risk to possible loss, damage or liability.
5. The following situations represent limited exceptions to paragraphs 1 and 2 of this policy:
  - a. If a school principal or his/her designee determines that a device was used appropriately by a student in an emergency situation, the school shall not discipline the student for such possession/use.
  - b. An individual student or parent or guardian on behalf of an individual student, may request permission in advance from the student's school principal or his/her designee to possess and use a device for a medical, educational, or other legitimate purpose that the principal/designee determines is necessary for the student's education. This shall include one-time permissions that are granted by a staff member with authority from the principal/designee to an individual student to make a specific telephone call or other specific communication.
  - c. Building principals and/or his/her designee(s) are authorized to establish school rules and acceptable use guidelines for limited, non-disruptive use of electronic devices during the school day in the school building or during school activities for educational, safety, medical, vocational or other legitimate reasons.
  - d. The principal and/or his/her designee shall determine whether the possession and use of a device is within the scope of authorized use.
  - e. The school principal, his/her designee shall have discretion to prospectively revoke any prior authorization that operated as a limited exception to paragraph (1) and (2) of this policy.
6. Students shall annually be provided with a copy of the rules that govern the possession and use of the devices covered by this policy.
7. Nothing within this policy shall be construed to limit a student's ability to use a device in a manner that functions as assistive technology necessary for a student's education and that is required under an individualized education plan (IEP) or a Section 504 agreement.

**Policy Approved: July 26, 2010**

**Policy Revised: October 22, 2012**

**March 23, 2015**