

## **RULE 16: CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY**

To promote the best possible learning and social environment in the classrooms and schools of Richmond County, students will adhere to the terms of this policy. The intent of the cell phone policy is to limit access to and use of cell phones in order to avoid distractions from learning and the loss of instructional time.

Under the terms of the RCSS cell phone and electronic devices policy, all cellular phones, smart phones, smart watches, any type of headphones, earbuds, and other devices or accessories used to electronically communicate are considered personal electronic communications devices and will be referred to as “cell phone(s)” and/or “electronic communication devices” throughout this policy.

The use of cell phones, electronic communication devices and/or accessories is prohibited for all students at all times during the instructional day, which is defined as the time the student arrives on campus until the end of the school day and/or the time the student leaves campus. The instructional day includes, but is not limited to, class periods, class changes, study halls, and any other structured or non-structured instructional activity that occurs during the normal school day. Students are not allowed to use cell phones in the common areas, hallways, restrooms, locker rooms or any other areas during the instructional day. [Note: The school site administrator, or designee, *may* offer an incentive for high school students to utilize phones during lunch time, if certain criteria are met, as decided upon by the administration.]

The possession of cell phones and electronic communication devices on school property is a privilege extended to students, and the School System is not responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged electronic communication devices or cell phones, nor will the administration or school officials investigate missing or damaged cell phones.

If students choose to bring cell phones or electronic communication devices to school, students are expected at all times to adhere to the following rules relative to cell phones and electronic communication devices and/or accessories:

1. Regardless of whether student is accessing the School System’s Technology Network while operating a cell phone or electronic communication device, all applicable provisions of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Student Conduct and Discipline must be followed.
2. Cell phones, electronic communication devices, and/or accessories must be turned completely off (not on silent or vibrate mode) and put away out of view (as directed by school administration) during the instructional day, as defined above.
3. No text messaging, application-based communication, or social media use is allowed during the instructional day.

Emergency calls may be made in the main office. Parents may contact their children by calling the school’s main office. School office staff are able to relay emergency messages from parents to students. Miscellaneous messages cannot be delivered during the school

day; students should discuss their appointments and other activities with parents/guardians outside of school instructional time.

Students with serious medical conditions or other unusual circumstances may be given special permission by the school principal to use a cell phone if it is determined to be essential for the health of the student.

**DISCIPLINE:** Due to the potential disruption a cell phone and electronic communication devices may cause to the instructional environment and safety of the school, the disciplinary actions and consequences for violation of this rule are as follows:

**First Offense:** The first offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the student or parent at the end of the same school day. The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

**Second Offense:** The second offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

**Third Offense:** The third offense will result in the electronic device being confiscated, to be picked up by the parent on the Friday following confiscation, at the specific time designated by the school. The student will receive one day of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

**Fourth Offense:** The fourth offense and thereafter will result in the electronic device being confiscated for ten (10) school days, and the parent must schedule a conference with an administrator to retrieve the electronic device. The student will receive three days of in-school suspension (ISS). The incident will be recorded in the student's discipline record within the student database (e.g., Infinite Campus).

Further incidents may result in the student losing the privilege of bringing electronic devices on campus, in-school suspension, out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

**Noncompliance:**

All administrators, teachers and/or staff members are authorized to confiscate cell phones, electronic communication devices and/or accessories any time a student is in violation of the Cell Phone/Electronic Communications Device policy. A student's refusal to surrender his/her electronic device(s) to school personnel will be considered noncompliance and insubordination, resulting in two (2) days of out of school suspension, and any other forms of discipline deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

Note: These progressive discipline steps in no way diminish the discretion of the school administrator, who has the right to issue more severe discipline depending upon the facts and circumstances.

