

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

This policy covers the student use of personal technology at Rowanty Technical Center, including cell phones, tablets, earbuds, personal gaming devices, and other technologies connected to the internet or cellular service during the school day. The use of personal communication devices by students during instructional time is determined to be disruptive to the educational environment and not conducive to productive learning experiences. The following conditions will be in effect.

A. Student Use of Personal Cell Phones, Personal Communication Devices and Accessories

1. Students are prohibited from using personal communication devices during instructional time or in instructional settings. Leaving the classroom during instructional time to use personal communication devices in another setting may constitute a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. Personal communication devices should not be used in bathrooms.
 - A. Rowanty students must keep their devices silent, not visible, and stored in their backpack, locker or in other phone storage locations identified by their teacher, from the first bell of the day until the last bell of the day.
 - B. Personal devices may not be used between classes, or in bathrooms. Personal devices may be used before or after the school day as permitted by school administration.
 - C. "Instructional setting" means any location where a staff member is providing instruction or instruction related, administrative, medical or health related activities, including, but not limited to classrooms; shops, labs areas, and exterior learning areas, locker rooms; school administrative offices, nurses' or other medical or psychological provider's office or assigned room within the period of the school day.
 - D. Personal wired headphones that plug directly into the school issued device will be allowed for instructional purposes as assigned by the teacher when using the school issued device.
 - E. Students retain sole responsibility for personal communication devices while attending school or school sponsored events. School Division resources should not be used to recharge such devices during the school day.
2. Inappropriate use of social media, images, text messages, or videos shall not be permitted at any time on school property or during a school-sponsored activity; this includes while using school transportation provided by Dinwiddie, Prince George, or Sussex School Divisions.
3. Cyberbullying will not be tolerated in any form.

B. Exemptions

Parents and guardians may request, in writing, to their home school principal (Dinwiddie, Prince George, or Sussex) for an exemption of the personal communication device policy. Allowable exemptions for cell phones and personal electronic communication devices must be written explicitly in their Section 504 plan, Individualized Education Plan, and/or individualized health care plans. Health care plans that include cell phone or personal electronic communication device usage must be approved by the Coordinator of Health Services. School based teams, in collaboration with families, shall explore viable alternatives to using a cell phone or personal communication device before implementing accommodations that include the use of these devices.

C. Communication During Emergencies

All staff members have access to communication devices during instructional time and can contact the school office should emergency conditions arise. During an actual school emergency, students who access stored personal communication devices to make calls for assistance will not be penalized. In cases of emergency, Rowanty is committed to transparent communication to families as soon as practicable through electronic mass communication systems.

D. Discipline of students

Students who violate this Policy will be subject to discipline ranging from a warning to out-of-school suspension as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. Students may also be prohibited from having any personal cell phone, communication device or accessory on school property or at school events if the School Administration determines that the student has failed to demonstrate the ability to adhere to applicable rules, regulations and policy. Any student who uses a personal cell phone, communication device or accessories in the violation of a local, state or federal crime will be referred to law enforcement and will be further disciplined for such action. Parents/legal guardians of minor students may be required to meet with the school administrators to address their student's continued violation of this Regulation.

E. Teachers and staff members

1. Teachers and staff members will enforce the terms of this Policy as well as other applicable regulations and policies in a consistent and fair manner.
2. Teachers will not be required to confiscate a personal communication device from a student who is in violation of this Policy. They must, however, follow the prescribed Disciplinary Guidelines in this area.
3. Teachers or staff members should clearly designate where in the instructional setting students should store personal communication devices for any student who cannot store such devices in a personal backpack, bag, purse, or locker.
4. Students may not be authorized to use personal communication devices to fill instructional time or to occupy students in lieu of providing instructional activities or as a reward.
5. Teachers and staff members should model appropriate cell phone or personal communication device control by not using such devices during instructional time.

6. Activity sponsors and coaches will use non-social media, school based electronic communication systems to contact students with information regarding their team or club.

F. Student and Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. Rowanty recognizes parents need to know how to contact their child in case of an emergency. If there is an emergency, parents may contact the main office of their child's school.
2. The student is solely responsible for their personal devices. The school and its staff are not liable for students' cell phones or other personal devices and accessories.
3. Parents are responsible for ensuring the school division has accurate contact information and emergency contacts on file. This information can be updated through the parent portal of the student information system.

Effective Date:
1/1/2025