

Question and Answer on High Bridge School District Electronic Device Policy

Q: Why was this policy implemented?

A: The policy on Personal Communication Devices (PCD) was implemented to focus students' attention, increase social interaction, limit addictive behaviors, limit cyberbullying, limit opportunities to cheat, and improve staff and student privacy.

Q: Does this policy apply to all grade levels?

A: PCDs restrictions are being implemented in grades Pre-K through Grade 8.

Q: When are students allowed to use their devices during the school day?

A: Students can use devices before entering the building(s) and after leaving the building(s) at dismissal.

Q: How will devices be stored during class time?

A: Middle School students keep them in their lockers, while elementary school students keep them in backpacks.

Q: Who is responsible for devices if they are damaged or stolen while in the school building?

A: Students remain personally responsible for their PCDs. The school does not assume responsibility for theft, loss, damage, misuse, or unauthorized use of PCDs brought onto school property.

Q: What accommodations are available for students who need Personal Communication Devices (PCD) for medical reasons?

A: Parents should communicate with the student's Principal, School Counselor, and Nurse to establish a plan and ensure proper documentation and accommodations for using medically necessary PCDs.

Q: Why can't students keep their phones in their pockets, turned off or on silent?

A: It removes distractions and temptations and provides consistent application across all classes.

Q: What happens if a student is found using a PCD during class time?

A: The student will be asked to turn in their device to the main office. If issues persist after appropriate opportunities, they will be treated as a more severe code of conduct violation, with the consequences as outlined below.

- **First:** PCD will be turned in for the remainder of the academic day & returned to the student at the end of the school day.
- **Second:** PCD will be turned in for the remainder of the academic day & parent/guardian will need to collect the device from the office. The student will be assigned a lunch detention.
- **Third:** PCD will be turned in for the remainder of the academic day & parent/guardian will need to collect the device from the office. The student will be assigned an after-school detention.
- **Additional:** PCD will be turned in for the remainder of the academic day & parent/guardian will need to collect the device from the office. The student will be assigned a suspension.

Q: How can students access their phones/PCD in an emergency?

A: We ask that in the case of an emergency, the district be the primary manager of communication. There are multiple modes of communication within the school buildings. Each classroom has a telephone, a building-wide intercom system, and teachers have access to handheld radios. The district works closely with local law enforcement agencies to devise standard response protocols, which are practiced monthly by staff and students. In the case of an actual emergency, the district relies on these standards and procedures for everyone's safety. Student use of PCDs can complicate emergency response.

Q: My child has a smartwatch, which I use to track and communicate with them during an emergency. Can they wear this device?

A: If the device can access the internet, record, or take pictures, then no.

Q: I can put my child’s smartwatch on “school mode,” which restricts its functions. Would this device violate the school policy?

A: Yes, the district cannot ensure/enforce if the device has been put on “school mode”.

Q: What is the policy on teachers and administrators having their phones during instructional time?

A: Teachers are expected to have their phones available for emergency communication. However, they should not use devices during instructional time unless it's for delivering information used for instruction or medical reasons.

Q: Will my child be searched if a staff member suspects they have a PCD on them?

A: No. The student will be sent to the main office and asked if they have a device. If a PCD is visible, a parent or guardian will be called to resolve the situation with the possibility of being asked to come to school.