

Date Submitted: September 19, 2000 Date reviewed: May 27, 2003, October 19, 2004, February 18, 2025	Policy 600-31
Subject: Student Personal Electronic Devices	Date Approved: October 17, 2000, January 17, 2006, February 21, 2006, May 15, 2007, March 17, 2009, July 19, 2016 April 15, 2025 Date Effective: October 17, 2000, November 16, 2004, January 17, 2006, February 21, 2006, May 15, 2007, March 17, 2009, July 19, 2016, April 15, 2025

1. **PURPOSE**

To establish a policy for students in possession of personal electronic communication devices while attending SCPS classes or school-sponsored activities.

2. **POLICY**

While Somerset County Public Schools encourages communication between the school, parents and students, it also recognizes that the use of certain personal electronic devices may disrupt the instructional process and create additional problems. Personal electronic devices include but are not limited to cell phones, smart phones, smart watches, handheld computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs), digital video cameras, and audio recorders. For the purpose of this policy any personal electronic device with the capability to take photos, videos, or audio will be referred to as a personal electronic device.

- A. In order to support safety and promote communication, SCPS students may possess personal electronic devices while on school grounds or attending school-sponsored activities under the following conditions:
- (1) During the school day, students are prohibited from using, activating or displaying personal electronic devices on school property or at school-sponsored activities and must be kept out of sight.

- (2) Students participating in after school activities must have the permission of the activity's sponsor.
 - (3) Personal electronic devices, including cell phones, must be deactivated and out of sight when not in use. They must be kept secured in a book-bag, backpack, purse, pocket or locker.
 - (4) If a personal electronic device is visible or emits a sound, it will be confiscated and held by school officials according to the policy guidelines. Somerset County Board of Education Policy # 600-31 Page 2.
 - (5) If a personal electronic device is confiscated due to violation of this policy, the principal has the right to examine evidence of recent electronic communications, photos or videos taken, only with probable cause relating to an incident that violated others.
 - (6) Somerset County Public Schools will not be responsible for any personal electronic device that is damaged, lost, stolen, and/or borrowed while on school property or during a school sponsored activity.
- B. Personal camera devices pose special concern for schools. When pictures are taken of other people without their permission, invasion privacy and harassment lawsuits are risked. These devices can also be used for other illegal and unethical purposes, such as to reproduce copyrighted material and cheating on tests. Therefore, in addition to the guidelines listed above on the use of electronic devices, the following applies to possession and use of personal camera devices:
- (1) Personal camera devices may not be used in any unethical or illegal manner.
 - (2) Personal camera devices may not be used to photograph another person who has a reasonable expectation of privacy without that person's knowledge and consent.
 - (3) Personal camera devices may not be used in a way that would violate another person's copyright.
 - (4) Personal camera devices may not be used to harass, intimidate, or bully another person or to invade another person's privacy.
 - (5) An image taken using a personal camera device may not be published, broadcast, or transmitted to any other person, by any means, without the knowledge and consent of each person appearing in that image who had a reasonable expectation of privacy at the time the image was recorded, or the person who owns the copyright in the material appearing in that image.
 - (6) Personal camera devices may not be used in any locker room, restroom, or any other place where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy.
- C. Exemptions are in effect for:
- (1) Students using personal electronic devices for medical reasons with principal or designee's permission.
 - (2) Law enforcement officers.
 - (3) Visitors on school property for an authorized program, meeting or function.
 - (4) Faculty or staff members employed by the Board of Education.

- (5) Student members of any volunteer fire department, ambulance company or rescue squad, who are designated to possess a pager on school property. The chief of the volunteer fire department, ambulance company or rescue squad and the school principal must approve the request for activated pagers in advance.

D. Students found in violation of this policy will:

- (1) have their personal electronic device(s) confiscated according to Policy Guidelines and returned only to a parent/guardian.
- (2) have their parents contacted.

Initial Adoption	09/19/2000	Revised	02/15/2025	Reviewed	2/18/2025	Next Review	2/18/2028
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