



## CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

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### Board Policy Statement

#### 6141.321– Cellular Phones/Electronic Communication Devices

Approved on October 2, 2023

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The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that many students possess and use cellular telephones and other portable electronic devices. These devices serve an important purpose in facilitating communication between the student and his/her family, as well as serving as tools to access electronic information. In the school setting, such portable electronic devices are permitted providing their use is consistent with this policy and does not interfere with the educational process or with safety and security.

**High School:** Student personal telecommunications devices may be turned on and operated before/after the regular school day during lunch, passing periods, or in an emergency situation that involves imminent physical danger. School staff may also authorize the student to use a personal telecommunications device for instructional purposes or to facilitate parent/guardian communications. Other than the times and circumstances herein described, personal telecommunications devices should be stored by the student in the student's personal belongings to limit distraction, balance screen time, support healthy and safe school culture and learning environments, and encourage students to practice face-to-face, interpersonal communication skills.

**Middle and School:** Student personal telecommunications devices may be turned on and operated before and after the regular school day, or times designated by school administration, or in an emergency situation that involves imminent physical danger. Staff may also authorize the student to use a personal telecommunications device for instructional purposes or to facilitate parent/guardian communications. Other than the times and circumstances herein described, personal telecommunications devices should be stored by the student in the student's personal belongings to limit distraction, balance screen time, support healthy and safe school culture and learning environments, and encourage students to practice face-to-face, interpersonal communication skills.

**Elementary School:** Elementary school students may possess cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices on school property and school-sponsored transportation, provided such devices are not visible, used, or activated, and are kept in the "off" position throughout the instructional school day. Students must keep their cellular phones and other wireless communication devices stored in a non-visible secure location during the instructional school day. Students may use their cellular phones and other wireless communication devices while waiting for the beginning of the instructional school day or waiting for a school bus at the end of the instructional school day.

**All Schools:**

Parents should not expect to communicate directly with their children using their devices during designated school time. Parents who need to communicate with their child in the case of an emergency should call the school office and communicate with school personnel the nature of their emergency who will then communicate as appropriate with the student impacted by the emergency.

Phones and/or electronic communication devices, and accessories (i.e. earbuds, headphones, smart watches, etc.), should remain concealed and be turned off unless in use pursuant to this policy. Such phones and other electronic communication devices may be used in compliance with the individual school's guidelines for usage. This time of usage may include before/after school as well as during the student's lunch time and in designated locations.

All students in possession of telecommunications devices, including, but not limited to personal cell phones, while on school property or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities will observe the following conditions:

1. Students will not use telecommunication devices in a manner that poses a threat to academic integrity, disrupts the learning environment or violates the privacy rights of others;
2. Students will not send, share, view or possess pictures, text messages, emails or other material depicting sexually explicit conduct, in electronic or any other form on a telecommunications device, while the student is on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, or on school buses or vehicles provided by the district;
3. When a school official has reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that a student is using a telecommunications device in a manner that violates the law, school rules, or is contrary to the guidelines established above, appropriate actions will be taken to ensure a safe and appropriate learning environment is maintained including the search **and/or** seizure of the device when school officials have a reasonable suspicion, based on objective and articulable facts, that such a search will reveal a violation of the law or school rules. The scope of the search will be limited to the violation of which the student is accused. Content or images that violate state or federal laws will be referred to law enforcement;
4. Students are responsible for devices they bring to school. The District/School will not be responsible for loss, theft, or destruction of devices brought onto school property or to school sponsored events.

(cf. 5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process) (cf. 5131 –  
Conduct)

(cf. 5131.8 – Off School Grounds Misconduct)

(cf. 5131.82 – Restrictions on Publications and Written or Electronic Material) (cf. 5131.911 –  
Bullying)

(cf. 5131.913 – Cyberbullying) (cf. 5144 –  
Discipline/Punishment) (cf. 5145.5 – Sexual  
Harassment)

(cf. 5145.51 – Peer Sexual Harassment)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes  
10-233j Student possession and use of telecommunications devices  
*Eisner v. Stamford Board of Education*, 440 F. 2d 803 (2nd Cir 1971)  
*Trachtman v. Anker*, 563 F. 2d 512 (2nd Cir. 1977) cert. denied, 435  
U.S. 925 (1978)  
*Hazelwood School District v. Ruhlmeir*, 484 U.S. 260, 108 S Ct 562  
(1988)  
*Bethel School District v. Fraser*, 478 US 675 (1986)  
*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community Dist.*, 393 US 503, (1969)

Policy adopted:

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