

Policy 4318 Use of Wireless Communication Devices

The board recognizes that cellular phones and other wireless communication devices have become an important tool through which parents communicate with their children. Therefore, students are permitted to possess such devices on school property so long as the devices are not activated, used, displayed or visible during the instructional day or as otherwise directed by school rules or school personnel. Wireless communication devices include, but are not limited to, cellular phones, electronic devices with internet capability, paging devices, two-way radios and similar devices.

A. AUTHORIZED USE

Administrators may authorize individual students to use wireless communication devices for personal purposes when there is a reasonable need for such communication. Teachers and administrators may authorize individual students to use the devices for instructional purposes, provided that they supervise the students during such use.

Although use generally is permitted before and after school, use of cellular phones and other wireless communication devices may be prohibited on school buses when noise from such devices interferes with the safe operation of the buses. In addition, elementary and middle school students who participate in after-school programs are prohibited from using wireless communication devices during such programs.

B. CONSEQUENCES FOR UNAUTHORIZED USE

School employees may immediately confiscate any wireless communication devices that are on, used, displayed or visible in violation of this policy. Absent compelling and unusual circumstances, confiscated wireless communication devices will be returned only to the student's parent.

The disciplinary consequences for violations of this policy shall be consistent with Section D of policy 4300, Student Behavior Policies. The superintendent or designee shall list in the Code of Student Conduct the specific range of consequences that may be imposed on a student for violations of this policy.

The following factors should be considered when determining appropriate consequences: whether the wireless communication device was used (1) to reproduce images of tests, obtain unauthorized access to school information or assist students in any aspect of their instructional program in a manner that violates any school board policy, administrative regulation or school rule; (2) to bully or harass other students; (3) to send illicit text messages; (4) to take and/or send illicit photographs; or (5) in any other manner that would make more severe disciplinary consequences appropriate.

C. SEARCH OF WIRELESS COMMUNICATION DEVICES

In accordance with policy 4342, Student Searches, a student's wireless communication device and its contents, including, but not limited to, text messages and digital photos, may be searched whenever a school official has reason to believe the search will provide evidence that the student has violated or is violating a law, board policy, the Code of Student

Conduct or a school rule. The scope of such searches must be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and not excessively intrusive in light of the nature of the suspected infraction.

D. LIABILITY

Students are personally and solely responsible for the security of their wireless communication devices. The school system is not responsible for the theft, loss or damage of a cellular phone or other personal wireless communication device.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-36, -390.2

Cross References: Student Behavior Policies (policy 4300), Disruptive Behavior (policy 4315), Student Searches (policy 4342)

Adopted: December 3, 2012

Northampton County Board of Education