

POLICY TITLE: Portable Communication Devices		
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/11/1990	MOST RECENTLY AMENDED: 1/22/2024	MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: School Management		

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish criteria regarding student use of portable communication devices (PCD's) and Personal Listening Devices (PLD) as defined herein. Student use of cell phones, PCD's, PLD's, or other electronic devices during the school day is a privilege. Adherence to the guidelines below is essential to maintaining an appropriate, learning-focused academic environment and the integrity of the classroom.

II. Policy Statement

PCDs and PLDs may serve as an outstanding instructional tool and learning resource if used appropriately and under the direction of the teacher or with teacher permission. We encourage our high school staff members and our students to use electronics and other 21st century devices to supplement instruction and learning. However, it has been proven that students who are on PCDs or PLDs when it is not part of the instructional lesson are not fully engaged in learning. In order to preserve the teaching and learning environment, this document is to clarify the cell phone/portable communication devices policy for Harford County Public Schools.

III. Definitions

- A. Deactivated means the device is not able to emit any notifications, which encompasses sound, vibration, and visual alerts and includes settings such as the off position or "Do Not Disturb" mode;

- B. Educational Environment means all locations where learning takes place, extending not only to classrooms but also libraries, laboratories, assembly halls, and online platforms.
- C. Portable Communication Device (PCD) means any electronic or battery powered instrument which transmits or receives voice, text, data or information in any form including, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, tracking devices, smart phones, tablets, electronic readers or language translators and which is not owned by Harford County Public Schools (HCPS).
- D. Regular School Day means the time when students are required to be in homeroom to the time of dismissal.
- E. Personal Listening Device (PLD) means any electronic instrument which transmits sound from a PCD to a personal user such as headphones, earbuds, or personal speakers.

IV. Elementary School

- A. Students in elementary school may possess a PCD or PLD on school grounds during the regular school day provided they are kept and maintained in the student's backpack and is Deactivated.
- B. Elementary students may possess and use a PCD or PLD on school grounds and buses when authorized to do so pursuant to the students Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan.
- C. Students in any grade may use PCD's or PLD's on school buses before or after the regular school day provided:
 - 1) students may not use PCDs for conversation, calls, photographing, or video or audio recording;
 - 2) such use does not include implementation of the audio component of the PCD unless the student uses a PLD.

V. Middle School

- A. Students in middle school may possess a PCD or PLD on school grounds during the regular school day provided kept and maintained in the student's locker and is Deactivated.
- B. Middle school students may possess and use a PCD or PLD on school grounds and buses when authorized to do so pursuant to the students Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan.
- C. Students in any grade may use PCD's or PLD's on school buses before

or after the regular school day provided:

- 1) students may not use PCDs for conversation, calls, photographing or video or audio recording;
- 2) such use does not include implementation of the audio component of the PCD unless the student uses a PLD.

VI. High School

- A. PLD's and PCD's are permitted on a student's person but must not be visible and is Deactivated in the Educational Environment, unless otherwise instructed by a teacher or staff member for a bona fide educational purpose..

- B. High school students may possess and use a PCD or PLD on school grounds and buses when authorized to do so pursuant to the students Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan.
- C. Students in any grade may use PCD's or PLD's on school buses before or after the regular school day provided:
 - 1) students may not use PCDs for conversation, calls, photographing or video or audio recording;
 - 2) such use does not include implementation of the audio component of the PCD unless the student uses a PLD.

VII. General Provisions

- A. Students' possession or use of personal PCDs and PLDs permitted under this policy shall not:
 - 1) disrupt the educational environment;
 - 2) thwart or disrupt HCPS network security;
 - 3) impede the student from being able to hear explicit directions from staff members or hear emergency signals/announcements;
 - 4) violate federal or state law or regulation;
 - 5) violate Board policy and procedure, including Board policy and procedure relating to student conduct and harassment; or
 - 6) invade the privacy of other students.
- B. Students and their parents are responsible for any theft of, loss of or damage to the student's PCD or PLD.
- C. Students using PCDs or PLDs in any manner that disrupts the educational environment, from within or from outside the classroom, or violates the rights of others, including, but not limited to, using the device in violation of our academic honesty policy, violating school conduct rules, harassing or bullying/cyber-bullying staff or students, photographing or video recording or using their device for unlawful purposes and/or in a manner that violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action.
- D. The privilege of using PCDs or PLDs may be revoked when used in a manner inconsistent with this policy or other Board policies.

Board Approval Acknowledged By:

Sean P. Bulson, Ed. D. Superintendent of Schools
Board of Education of Harford County

DRAFT

Policy Action Dates					
ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE
Adopted	6/11/1990	Amended	11/26/2001		
Amended	7/8/1991	Amended	8/14/2006		
Amended	6/10/1996	Amended	7/29/2013		
Amended	6/9/1997				

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME: Patrick Spicer		JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER: General Counsel
PERSON RESPONSIBLE:		JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:
DESIGNEE NAME: N/A		JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE: N/A
REFERENCE 1 TYPE:	REFERENCE 1 NO.	REFERENCE 1 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 2 TYPE:	REFERENCE 2 NO.	REFERENCE 2 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 3 TYPE:	REFERENCE 3 NO.	REFERENCE 3 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 4 TYPE:	REFERENCE 4 NO.	REFERENCE 4 DESCRIPTION:
REFERENCE 5 TYPE:	REFERENCE 5 NO.	REFERENCE 5 DESCRIPTION:
POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005: School Administration - .02.08.033		