

335 – Electronic Devices and Non-School Appropriate Items Policy



I. Definitions

A. Electronic Devices

Including, but not limited to:

- Cell phones with and without picture-taking capacity
- i-Phones; and other ‘smartphones’
- i-Watches or other ‘smart watches’
- i-Pods and other mp-3 players
- Tablets, with or without internet
- Portable gaming devices
- Lap-tops, and small personal computers such as chromebooks, etc not supplied by the school

B. School or School Events

- Hours that make up school day
- Including school-provided transportation to and from curricular activities and extracurricular activities
- Field trips
- Extended school-sponsored trips or activities

C. Pass Time

- The period designated in the upper grades between classes or to allow students to move between classrooms

D. Recess

- Time periods designated in elementary school for exercise or outside activity regardless of whether or not it is designated as instructional time by the school

E. Lunch Time

- Time periods designated for lunch
- May be combined with a recreational recess time

F. Parent/Legal Guardian

- Person(s) who has legal responsibility for the child’s education

G. Individualized Suspicion

Information that individual has violated policy;

- Generally required for constitutional search (including personal belongings);
- Exceptions are possible when privacy interests implicated in search are minimal and where other safeguards are available;
- Not as exacting in the public school setting as in criminal law.

H. Reasonable Suspicion

- Reasonable suspicion need not be based on a single factor, but on totality of the circumstances;
- Aggregate effect of all information available at time of search;

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- Does not require absolute certainty, but only ‘sufficient probability,’ the sort of commonsense conclusion about human behavior upon which practical people are entitled to rely.

I. Medical reasons

- Student’s illness, with or without a health care professional’s documentation
- Student’s recurring illness or medical problem(s)

J. Instructional time

- Hours during the school day designated by the school;
- Cumulative hours and days during the course of the school year must equal 990 instructional hours and 180 instructional days, consistent with R277-419.

II. Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices may be used during the school day, or during school-sponsored activities or events as follows:

A. Students may NOT have electronic devices in their possession between 7:45 a.m. and the end of the school day or at school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Exceptions may be made, only in writing through the assigned school administrator, for specific and documented medical reasons, unusual family situations, or specifically designated periods.

B. If students are found in possession of a prohibited electronic device, the device will be confiscated and can only be recovered by a parent/legal guardian at times designated by the school. Students will also be subject to school discipline.

C. Students/parents are also on notice that confiscated electronic devices are subject to search by school administrators.

III. Exceptions to the general GWA Electronic Devices Policy may be made in the judgment and discretion of the Executive Director or designee. Exceptions will only be made for compelling circumstances (see following examples), and only if offered expressly by the parent/requestor:

A. Medical Reasons

- GWA administrators may give specific permission for written parental requests for students to possess electronic devices during the regular school day (or instructional time) for specific and documented medical reasons, if the devices are on silent mode.

B. Parent Request

- A parent may request an exception from this policy for a limited time period and only upon showing a documented and substantial need which cannot be satisfied by other means. Exceptions may be granted at the sole discretion of the Executive Director or his/her designee and may be rescinded by the Executive Director at any time.

C. Teacher Permission

- Teachers may allow for limited use of electronic devices subject to prior written approval by the Executive Director. Use must be for a defined period of time and directly related to an instructional activity. Permission may be rescinded effective immediately if students are found to be in violation of the policy outside of the designated class time.

D. Emergency

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- Emergency use of electronic devices shall be limited to the provisions of this policy, e.g. to protect the safety of the student, other students, school employees during the limited period of the emergency.

Parents shall make written requests for exceptions to the GWA policy to the Executive Director or his/her designee prior to the student's need to possess or use an electronic device in violation of the school policy. GWA shall have forms available at the main office and/or on the school website for parent/student requests for exceptions to the electronic device policy.

IV. Consequences for Violation of Policy

A. Students will not be given warnings before being subject to the provisions of this policy. Parents and students are expected to be familiar with and to act consistent with the policy at all times. Students may be entitled to a warning by teachers for violations prior to discipline or confiscation of the device.

B. Only parents/legal guardians may retrieve electronic devices belonging to their children. They may reclaim devices on school days upon appointment with a designated administrator. Devices may only be maintained by the school for four weeks after the parents/legal guardians have been contacted, at which time the devices may be donated to local charitable organizations. If devices are donated, all personal information shall be cleared by the school prior to the donation. The school is not responsible for lost, theft or security of confiscated devices.

C. A school may impose other consequences for a student's violation of the electronic device policy only following notice to the school community. Such penalties are not exhaustive and more than one penalty may be imposed, if warranted. Such penalties may include:

- Loss of electronic device privileges
- Disciplinary letter
- In-school suspension Suspension
- Loss of extracurricular or honor privileges or recognition.

If students are defiant and will not cooperate with school administrators and/or will not surrender electronic device(s), the designated school administrator may take appropriate action for the safety and well-being of the student and other students or employees at the school. The Executive Director or designee shall notify a parent immediately of additional penalties.

V. Notice to Students and Parents of Policy

A. Parents and students shall receive annual written notice of GWA's electronic device policy. Written notice may be satisfied by posting the policy on GWA's website.

B. Parents and students shall receive annual notice of the policy;

- Parents and students shall receive notice of changes in GWA's policy in a timely manner and through reasonable means.
- A copy of the most current policy shall always be available in GWA's main office and shall be posted online on GWA's website.

C. GWA may require that parents return a copy of the policy with their signature indicating that they have had access to the policy.

D. Information to parents should include exceptions to the policy and potential consequences for students.

E. Information to parents shall provide clear information of how best to contact students during school hours or activities, in lieu of immediate contact by electronic device.

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F. Students and parents shall be notified that law enforcement may be contacted, at GWA’s discretion, if circumstances warrant such contact.

VI. Confiscated Electronic Devices

A. Only GWA personnel may confiscate student electronic devices.

B. GWA employees are discouraged from searching student electronic devices except with “reasonable suspicion” that would warrant a search. Educators who confiscate an electronic device in accordance with this policy may search the device based on their “reasonable suspicion” that the student has violated this policy. Such a search may include a review of text messages, photo files, and recent, missed, or dialed calls.

C. Licensed school employees may search an electronic device if the device is found by the employee for the limited purpose of determining the device’s owner.

D. Schools will do their best to guard and protect confiscated electronic devices, but are not responsible for loss, damage, theft.

E. Schools will make a good faith effort to notify parent(s) that electronic devices are in school’s possession. Parents will be expected to retrieve confiscated devices within seven school days. Unclaimed devices cleared of personal data may be donated after four weeks.

VII. Other Provisions

A. Picture taking or recording by students is strictly forbidden in school or school activities. This is particularly important in private areas, such as restrooms.

B. Students bring electronic devices on school property or to school activities at their own risk. GWA is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic equipment.

C. Students are strictly responsible for their own electronic devices. If devices are borrowed or taken and misused by non-owners, device owners are jointly responsible for the misuse or policy violation(s).

D. Students and parents should be informed and understand that confiscated electronic devices may be subject to search by school officials.

E. A student’s penalties for violation(s) of an electronic device policy provision may vary depending upon the intentional nature of the violation, other disciplinary actions the student may have received and specific circumstances of the violation.