

**A. Purpose**

To establish guidelines regarding the use of personal mobile devices in Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS).

**B. Background**

1. FCPS strives to ensure that instructional time is focused on learning and that the school environment fosters opportunities for students to build healthy relationships with their teachers and peers. To support these goals, students' access to cell phones and personal electronic communication devices will be restricted during the academic school day.
2. This Regulation aligns with the [FCPS Student Code of Conduct](#), current practice, and use of an ever-expanding range of devices used by students on school grounds and/or at FCPS-sponsored activities to receive data via voice or text, take and share photos, record and watch videos, play games, and/or listen to music.

**C. Definitions**

1. "Academic School Day" is defined as any structured or unstructured learning experience that occurs from when the first bell rings at the start of the school day until the dismissal bell rings at the end of the school day, including instructional periods, lunch, recess, passing periods, and transitional periods.
2. "Approved Instructional Purposes" is defined to mean an approved PMD that may be used to support student learning when expressly permitted by a school administrator and when an FCPS-issued electronic communication device is unavailable.
3. "Caregiver" is defined, for the purposes of this Regulation, to mean a student who provides care, supervision, or assistance to another individual due to the individual's age, disability, chronic illness, cognitive impairment, or other functional limitations.
4. "Multilingual Learner" (ML) is defined to mean an individual aged three (3) through twenty-one (21) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in FCPS and who communicates in a language other than English, or whose family uses a primary language other than English in the home, and whose English language proficiency falls within the range established by the State for an English language development program.
5. "Personal Electronic Communication Device" or "Personal Mobile Device" (PMD) is defined to mean any portable electronic device, not provided by FCPS, which is carried or transported by a student to receive, send, or record voice, image, or text content, including cell phones, tablets, laptops, smart watches, wireless earbuds or headphones, and any other device with communication functions.

6. “School Property” or “School Grounds” is defined to mean any school or other FCPS facility, including grounds owned or operated by FCPS, FCPS buses and other FCPS vehicles, chartered vehicles, and the facility and/or grounds of any FCPS-sponsored activity involving students.
7. “Social Media Platform” is defined as an internet-based application, website, or digital service that enables users to create, share, or view content or to interact with other users through profiles, accounts, feeds, messaging, comments, reactions, or similar social features, and that is primarily designed to facilitate social interaction, user-generated content, or content distribution to a broad or semi-public audience.

#### **D. Procedures**

##### **1. Applicability**

- a. This Regulation applies to students in prekindergarten (Pre-K) through grade 12 and governs students’ use of PMDs on school property.
- b. **Exclusions.** This Regulation does not apply to students’ use of FCPS-issued technology, which is addressed in [FCPS Regulation 434-01, Student Use, Technology](#).

##### **2. Student PMDs**

- a. Students are prohibited from using a PMD during the academic school day (*i.e.*, from the first bell to the dismissal bell), when on school grounds or when accessing FCPS transportation for any purpose during the school day, except for the permitted uses detailed below.
- b. If a PMD is brought to school, it must be stored out of sight and either shutdown or in airplane or school mode, depending upon the device, during the academic school day.

##### **3. Student PMD Use Before or After School.** Students may use PMDs before and after the academic school day, including when riding FCPS transportation to and from school.

##### **4. Permitted Student PMD Uses**

- a. **Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Section 504 Plans**
  - i. Use of PMDs must be permitted where included in a student’s IEP, Section 504 Plan, or where required by law.
  - ii. The IEP and/or Section 504 teams for a student with a documented disability should collaborate to consider the need for the device to support the student’s needs and should provide educational and/or assistive technology supports as appropriate.
  - iii. The need for the device will be reviewed at the student’s IEP or Section 504 review meeting as needed.
- b. **Student with Documented Health/Medical Needs.** Student use of PMDs during the academic school day may be permitted when necessary for the management of a student’s documented health/medical need. In these cases, school leadership and school health suite staff should collaborate with the student, their physician, and their parent(s) to gather documentation of the need and create a plan for appropriate and discreet access to the PMD.
- c. **Statutory Extenuating Circumstances.** School administrators may grant exceptions

for students to access their PMD:

- i. To access language translation tools to ensure educational equity for multilingual students when FCPS-issued technological devices are not available or sufficient for this purpose; or
  - ii. For the purpose of meeting caregiving responsibilities, as approved by a school principal.
- d. **Requests for Exceptions**
- i. Parents may request an exception for their children to use PMDs during the academic school day as listed above.
  - ii. Requests must be made to a school administrator, and, if applicable, must include supporting documentation.
  - iii. When considering exceptions under this Regulation, FCPS will examine alternative ways to achieve the purpose of the exception.

5. **School-Sponsored Events and Extracurricular Activities**

- a. FCPS may restrict use of PMDs during school events and activities held outside of the academic school day and/or off school grounds during the academic school day.
- b. School administrators may determine the appropriate restrictions on student use of PMDs during off-campus field trips and comparable activities and may permit their use if appropriate. Schools should consider the nature, location, and duration of the field trip in making these determinations and should communicate these expectations to students and/or parents before the trip.

6. **Communications**

- a. **Communications from Students to Parents.** Students must use school-based communication tools and methods (*e.g.*, phones in the main school office, their classroom, or other centralized location) to communicate emergency or non-emergency needs with parents.
- b. **Communications from Parents to Students**
  - i. As student devices are required to be off, in airplane mode, or school mode while on school grounds, parents are encouraged to refrain from calling or texting their child's PMD during the academic school day.
  - ii. Parents are encouraged to use school-based communication tools and channels to communicate family-based emergencies and non-emergencies during the academic school day.]
  - iii. If a child contacts their parent during school hours via a PMD, parents are encouraged to reinforce responsible student technology use expectations and remind their child to focus on learning.
- c. **Communication from Staff to Students.** School staff and all co-curricular and extra-curricular sponsors must use school-based communication tools (*i.e.*, FCPS email, Schoology, or public address [PA] announcement) and channels for sharing activity and athletic scheduling information with students during the academic school day.
- d. **Communications During Emergency Situations**
  - i. FCPS is committed to communicating with families during emergency situations at schools and will use school-based communication tools and platforms to communicate necessary updates with families.

- ii. During school-based emergencies, families are encouraged to refrain from contacting their student directly as student safety is best supported when they can give their complete attention to the important instructions provided by school staff.
7. **Enforcement and Violations**
- a. All FCPS staff are expected to support the enforcement of this Regulation by utilizing Tier 1 responses in accordance with the [FCPS Student Code of Conduct](#).
  - b. School administrators are responsible for enforcing violations of this Regulation and imposing disciplinary responses in accordance with the [FCPS Student Code of Conduct](#).
  - c. FCPS will exercise reasonable care to maintain the security of personal electronic communication devices that are held by FCPS.
8. **Liability.** FCPS and its staff do not assume responsibility for liability of loss, theft, or damage to any PMD, even if confiscated, or for the unauthorized use of any such device.
9. **Notification and Availability of this Regulation.** FCPS will make this Regulation available in multiple languages in the [FCPS Student Code of Conduct and Parent Handbook](#), on FCPS's website, and at school events.

#### **E. Related Information**

1. **Board Policy**
- a. [Policy 118, Personal Mobile Devices](#)  
(<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/118>)
  - b. [Policy 403, Student Discipline](#)  
(<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/403>)
2. **FCPS Regulations**
- a. [Regulation 403-01, Student Discipline](#)  
(<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/403-01>)
  - b. [Regulation 434-01, Technology, Student Use](#)  
(<https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/434-01>)
3. **FCPS Resources**
- a. [FCPS / Families & Students / Cell Phone Policy](#)  
([https://www.fcps.org/families\\_students/cell\\_phone\\_policy](https://www.fcps.org/families_students/cell_phone_policy))
  - b. [FCPS / Families & Students / Student Code of Conduct](#)  
([https://www.fcps.org/families\\_students/student\\_code\\_of\\_conduct](https://www.fcps.org/families_students/student_code_of_conduct))
4. **Federal Law**
- a. [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)  
([https://fcps-md.info/IDEA\\_20\\_USC\\_1400](https://fcps-md.info/IDEA_20_USC_1400))
  - b. [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#) (Section 504)  
([https://fcps-md.info/Section\\_504\\_29\\_USC\\_794](https://fcps-md.info/Section_504_29_USC_794))

5. **Maryland Law**

- a. [Joanne C. Benson Maryland Phone-Free Schools Act, H.B. 0525, 449<sup>th</sup> Gen. Assemb., Reg. Sess. \(Md. 2026\)](https://fcps-md.info/HB0525)  
(<https://fcps-md.info/HB0525>)

**F. Regulation History** (Maintained by Legal Services)

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|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Responsible Office</i> | Department of System Accountability and School Administration; Office of Student Services |
| Adoption Dates            | 07/28/26                                                                                  |
| Review Dates              |                                                                                           |
| Revision Dates            |                                                                                           |