

Meridian Technical Charter High School
Students

Series 500

Policy Title: Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Policy No. 502.8

Student-Owned Electronic Communications Devices

The Board adopts this policy to place controls on the use of student-owned electronic devices at school. These devices include cell phones, watches, tablets, any device that can send or receive data, etc. There has been a rising concern that spending too much time on social media or using cell phones may be detrimental to students' physical and mental health. The Board's priority is that all students are engaged in learning without distraction.

By placing limits on the permissible use of such electronic devices, the Board intends to:

1. Adopt policy in alignment with State Department of Education guidance on cell phones;
2. Promote student safety;
3. Support staff in maintaining an environment that encourages learning;
4. Reduce distractions in the learning environment;
5. Improve academic focus;
6. Promote responsible technology use;
7. Prevent cyberbullying;
8. Mitigate the privacy concerns posed by personal electronic devices; and
9. Teach students appropriate use of personal devices in the workplace.

Restrictions on Time and Location of Use

Students are prohibited from using cell phones in the following times and places:

1. During class time;
2. In bathrooms or changing rooms; and
3. During assemblies or other in school events.

Students are permitted to use cell phones in the following times and places:

1. Before and after the school day;
2. At school activities outside of school hours;
3. During lunch;
4. During passing periods;
5. In class when directed by the teacher; and
6. In assemblies or other events when instructed by a teacher.

Any use of an electronic device required by a student's 504 plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall be permitted regardless of whether it would otherwise violate this policy.

Students may use a personal electronic device in the case of an emergency to contact help. In this policy, an emergency is an event that poses an immediate threat to the health or safety of any person or a risk of damage to property. If a student needs to use a personal electronic device in such an emergency, they should ensure they are in as safe a location as is feasible.

If a student's parent/guardian or their designee needs to contact a student in the case of an emergency at a time when student cell phone use is not permitted, the parent/guardian or designee should call the school office and ask staff to relay the message or bring the student to the office to speak with the parent/guardian or designee by phone or in-person.

Containment of Devices

When use of personal electronic devices is not permitted, such devices must be turned off and/or silenced and stored in:

1. The student's locker;
2. The student's bag, purse, or pocket and out of sight; or
3. A location in the classroom designated by the teacher.

The Administrator may set further procedures and rules to ensure this policy is followed. The School may also make use of technology-based approaches, such as monitoring or blocking internet access.

Students are responsible for safeguarding devices they bring to school. The School shall not be responsible for loss, theft, damages, or destruction of student owned devices brought onto school property.

Use of Devices

Student-owned electronic devices shall not be used in a manner that disrupts the educational process, including, but not limited to, posing a threat to academic integrity or violating confidentiality or privacy rights of another individual. Access to the devices is a privilege and not a right. Each student will be required to follow the Acceptable Use of Electronic Networks Policy and the Internet Access Conduct Agreement.

The use of cameras in any type of electronic device is strictly prohibited in restrooms and classrooms unless a certified Charter School employee authorizes the student to do otherwise. Where students are allowed to use electronic devices, they are required to obtain permission before taking a photograph or video of any individual. Students must also obtain permission

from any individual appearing in a photograph or video prior to posting on any social networking site or other internet site.

Students found to be using any electronic communications device to in any way send or receive personal messages, data, or information that would contribute to or constitute cheating on any student assessment, project, or assignment shall be subject to discipline. Students shall comply with any additional rules developed by the school and classroom teacher concerning appropriate use of personal electronic devices.

Disciplinary Action

Students violating the provisions of this policy are subject to a disciplinary action. The teacher/school will take the following steps with the student:

1. Verbal reminder to put phone away;
2. Have the student leave the phone in a secure location in the classroom;
3. Teacher contacting student parent/guardian about the issue;
4. Student putting phone in a secure location when they enter the classroom;
5. Phone taken to the office until the end of the day;
6. Phone held in the office for parent/guardian to pick up;
7. Phone left in office from when student arrives until they leave school for the day;
8. Phone left at home;
9. Suspension from school;
10. Expulsion from Meridian Technical Charter High School.

These steps are examples of consequences that may be enforced. They do not have to be enforced in order.

Implementation & Review of Policy

The Board directs the Administrator or their designee to inform staff, students, and parents/guardians about this policy and how it will be implemented. The Board also directs the Administrator or their designee to develop practices that reinforce the importance of and ways of addressing:

1. Digital literacy lessons;
2. The effects of cyberbullying;
3. Privacy concerns; and
4. Online disinformation.

The Administrator shall report to the Board each year about the effectiveness of this policy and shall recommend changes to it as needed.

Legal References: Executive Order 2024-11 Phone Free Learning Act

Policy History

Adopted on:

Revised on:

Reviewed on: