

**BOARD AGENDA ITEM**

**February 23, 2021**

***SUBJECT:***

Revision of Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, Second Reading

***BACKGROUND INFORMATION:***

Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices provides the basic structure for students who possess personal telecommunication devices during the school day, but does not specifically identify smartwatches. Smartwatches have many of the same capabilities as smartphones, including the ability to send or receive communication and take pictures and/or videos.

***ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:***

The revision of Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices to add smartwatches explains to students, parents/guardians, school staff and administration how students may possess and use smartwatches during the school day.

***RECOMMENDATION:***

Approve the revision of Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices, Second Reading

***ATTACHMENTS:***

Policy JICJ Paging Devices, Cell Phones, and Other Personal Electronic Devices

***PREPARED BY:***

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# PAGING DEVICES, CELL PHONES, AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Code **JICJ** Issued **12/1502/21**

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Purpose: To establish the basic structure for any possession/use by students of paging devices, cell phones, and other personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, in school.

## DEFINITIONS FOR PURPOSES OF THIS POLICY

- A paging device is defined in South Carolina law as a telecommunications device, to include a mobile telephone (cell phone) that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor.
- A cell phone, while included in the general definition of a paging device, also includes any digital or analog portable communication device or multi-function device that has two-way communication capability (whether aural, visual or a combination thereof) and operates through a cellular telecommunication system, a global satellite system or an AM or FM two-way radio system.
- A personal electronic device includes any digital or analog portable electronic device that can capture, store, or transfer visual images such as a personal data assistant (PDA), Blackberry, iPhone (or similar smart phone), laptop computer or mini-computer (with or without wireless (WiFi) or cellular interface capability), and digital (or film-type) camera, but does not include a calculator or device utilized strictly for computational purposes.
- A violation is the activation on school grounds during the school day of any paging device, cell phone, or any other personal electronic device, including smartwatches, except as authorized by this policy.

The Aiken County Board of Education allows possession (but not use) of personal telecommunications devices by students in order to reflect societal trends and a relaxation in state law. However, the board of education finds that the activation and/or use of personal communication devices by students during the school day, as facilitated by, but in violation of the possession-only policy, has an adverse effect on classroom instruction, student punctuality, test security, personal student privacy, the ability of school officials to maintain discipline generally, and maintaining order during times of emergency. Therefore this policy is intended to set forth the specific circumstances under which a student may bring and personally possess a paging device, cell phone, and/or other electronic communications device onto school grounds and to establish clearly the consequences for violations.

Middle and high school students may possess a paging device, cell phone, or other electronic communications device, including smartwatches, on school grounds provided that such device is not activated and/or utilized for any function unless specifically authorized as part of an instructional directive by a teacher or other classroom supervisor, such as with "bring your own device" type instructional utilization. This rule applies during the school day hours and at off-campus activities during the school day hours. Cell phones may be activated during school bus rides to and from school unless specifically prohibited by the driver for safety reasons such as excessive noise or disruption.

Elementary school students may not bring a paging device, cell phone, or other electronic device, including smartwatches, to school unless part of an instructional directive or under a "bring your own device" type program. (A principal may approve an occasional exception to this general prohibition by prior written permission.)

Cell phones or paging devices are permitted at school events during non-school hours.

A first unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in a device otherwise permitted under this policy being taken by the school administrator for the remainder of the day and a warning being issued. The student must sign a "Condition for Return" acknowledgement and agreement before being able to bring the cell phone, pager, or electronic device back on the school campus.

A second unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in a loss of the privilege for 10 school days and further warning.

A third unauthorized activation with no related infraction will result in loss of the privilege for the remainder of the school year, and at least one day of suspension [in-school (ISS) or out-of-school (OSS)].

Should any unauthorized activation also involve other violations of the code of student conduct (such as cheating, invasions of personal privacy, etc.), more serious disciplinary consequences may be imposed as appropriate to the gravity of the violation (up to an expulsion recommendation for serious associated violations), but in no event with less than a minimum of three days OSS.

A student needing a paging device or cell phone for a documented temporary or permanent medical need or accommodation or for volunteer service on a fire or emergency services team (for 18 year-old students or younger students who are interns in such programs and demonstrate that possession of such device is necessary to fulfilling his/her program requirements) may be exempted from the prohibition of this policy as approved in writing by the principal.

All cell phones, pagers, and personal electronic devices, such as smartwatches, permitted under this policy are brought at the risk of the possessor/owner thereof and the district cannot be liable for the loss, destruction, or theft of the device.

Adopted 5/22/07; Revised 8/11/09, 12/8/15, 02/23/21

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Legal references:

S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

[Section 59-63-280](#) - Possession of paging devices by public school students; mobile telephones included; adoption of policies.