The Board is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive learning and working environment. Student use of personal electronic devices during the school day, in school-sponsored activities and on District property has increased classroom disruptions; facilitated cheating, plagiarism, and the unfiltered and unregulated access to the internet; resulted in an increase of threatening, bullying, and other inappropriate electronics usage, created disruptions during other school activities; and, overall, has increasingly disrupted the delivery of educational and other school-sponsored programs in all schools. This policy addresses the limitations on use of electronic devices by students during the school day and in school-sponsored activities.

1. Definitions.

a. “Personal electronic device” or “PD” means any device in a student’s possession which electronically communicates, sends, receives, stores, reproduces or displays voice and/or text electronic or data, including but not limited to cellular phones, pagers, smart phones, music and media players, gaming devices, tablets, laptop computers and personal digital assistants or other comparable devices not connected to a standard telephone outlet or hardwired electric connection and which receives data or signals from radio waves, dedicated electronic links, cellular networks or wireless networks connected to the internet.

b. “School day” means the period of time between the first scheduled bell and the last scheduled bell of the instructional day, and any other time in which instruction occurs, or a student is engaged in a school-supervised activity, including but not limited to practice times, field trips, and athletic competitions or other school-sponsored events in which the student is a participant.

c. “Possession” means on a student’s person, on or in his/her personal belongings, or otherwise within a student’s custody or control.

2. Student Rights and Responsibilities

a. A student who possesses a PD shall be solely responsible for its care.

b. Students may possess PDs on all RRPS school sites, including athletic fields, school buses, at school-sponsored activities and while the student is under the supervision and control of school district employees. Unless prohibited by a school’s principal or designee, use of PDs in the possession of a student is limited to the time before the school day begins, and after the school day ends. Except as permitted in subparagraph 2.c through e, PDs shall be stored in a student’s backpack or purse, locker, or vehicle and powered off during the school day.

c. If permitted by the principal of the high school attended by the student, students in grades 9-12 may use PDs during their lunch period.
d. With prior written approval from the principal or his/her designee, a student may use a PD during the school day:

1) to contact a family member in the case of the student’s or family member’s special medical circumstances; or,

2) if a student is using the device for an educational or instructional purpose with the teacher’s permission and supervision.

e. PDs may be permitted on school buses, as authorized by the driver, unless use of the PD causes a disruption on the school bus.

f. Students shall not use PDs on District property or at a school-sponsored activity to access and/or view internet websites that are otherwise blocked to students at school on school-owned computers or electronic devices. Blocked sites include, but are not limited to networking sites and YouTube.

g. Student use of PDs in violation of this policy or in an unauthorized manner which disrupts the school day or school-sponsored activity may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the PD. When a PD is confiscated, it shall only be released and/or returned to the student’s parent/legal guardian in accordance with procedures promulgated by the Superintendent or designee. It is the student’s parent/legal guardian’s responsibility to retrieve the device according to school procedures.

h. Even if use of a PD is otherwise permitted, the following activities are always prohibited:

1) Possessing, viewing, sending or sharing video or audio information having sexual, violent or threatening content on school grounds, school events or school buses;

2) Transmitting school materials for unethical purposes such as cheating;

3) Any activity which may be in violation of the Rio Rancho Public School Bullying Prevention Policy and Procedural directive; and,

4) Use of PDs in locker rooms, bathrooms, swimming pool areas, other areas where individuals may be dressing or attending to personal hygiene, or any other area where use of PDs have been expressly prohibited by the school principal or designee.

5) Any use of PDs determined by a school’s principal or designee as substantially disruptive to the school’s educational environment.
4. **District Staff Rights and Responsibilities**

   a. Rio Rancho Public Schools shall not be responsible for the theft, loss or damage to PDs brought to school by a student.

   b. Each school’s principal shall develop written internal procedures for staff concerning confiscation of PDs in the possession of students. These procedures shall include, but are not limited to, expectations that the staff will immediately secure the device and turn the device into the school’s designated location, develop a process for parents/legal guardians to retrieve devices, and record the type of device, when the device was confiscated and why.

   c. District staff, including bus drivers, may confiscate PDs when such devices are being used in violation of this policy or the school’s procedural directive and/or internal school rule. Upon confiscation, district staff shall follow all district and school procedural directives and processes.

   d. District staff may search confiscated PDs and examine the content of students’ PDs when there is reasonable suspicion of use that is in violation of District policies, procedures or rules, or in violation of State or Federal laws or regulations. Any search of the PD shall comply with District policies 339 (Search and Seizure) and 363 (Law Enforcement).

5. **Disciplinary Consequences**

   Disciplinary consequences for violating this policy or a school site rule may range from loss of privilege to use a PD to suspension and expulsion based on the number of previous violations, the nature and severity of the violation, and the context in which the violations occurred. Discipline shall be imposed consistently with each school’s disciplinary matrix.

Rio Rancho Public Schools  
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