

CELLULAR TELEPHONE POLICY

On March 23, 2005, the Boston School Committee approved a new Boston Public Schools policy on student use of cellular telephones in schools. The consequences for cell phone use were further revised by subsequent revisions to the Code of Conduct, most recently on September 4, 2013.

This policy was developed through a collaborative process among the School Committee, schools, and the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC), who surveyed their peers on this issue and presented their findings publicly at several School Committee meetings. The final policy reflects extensive involvement of the members of BSAC.

PURPOSE

The Boston Public Schools policy on cellular telephones is designed to ensure that the use of cell phones does not interfere with teaching and learning during the school day.

Since 1998, the Boston Public Schools has allowed individual schools to set guidelines regarding the use of cellular telephones as part of the School Based Rules. The increased popularity of cell phones among BPS students has resulted in the need to have a district-wide policy, with uniform guidelines and consequences that would apply to all students.

This cellular telephone policy was developed in cooperation with the members of the Boston Student Advisory Council, representing every high school in the BPS.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in all Boston Public Schools at all levels, including pilot schools and Horace Mann Charter Schools.

POLICY

1. Students are permitted to use cell phones *only* during the following times:
 - before school hours outside or inside the school building;
 - after school hours outside or inside the school building;
 - at after-school or sports activities, only with the permission of the coach, instructor or program director;
 - at evening or weekend activities inside the school building.
2. The use of cell phones for any purpose – including telephone calls, text messaging and other functions – is not permitted at any other time on school grounds.
3. Cell phones must not be visible during the school day.
4. Cell phones must be turned completely off (not simply on silent or vibrate mode) during the school day.

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

Each school will designate staff to monitor student violations of the cell phone policy.

Consequences for students found to be in violation of the cell phone policy will be as follows (**note: students must turn off cell phones prior to turning phones over to the school, and phones will remain off**):

1. First offense: Student's cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
2. Second and subsequent offenses: For a period of no more than 10 days, students will be obligated to drop their phones off at the main office at the beginning of the school day, prior to attendance, and pick up their phones at the end of the school day.
3. Students committing repeated violations of this policy may be subject to additional disciplinary action, consistent with the *Code of Conduct*.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy took effect on July 1, 2005, and is incorporated into the *2013-2014 Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students*. It has been incorporated in the 2010 and 2013 revisions to the Code of Conduct.

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