

The RANCHES ACADEMY ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

I. Definitions.

A. Electronic devices include cell phones with and without picture-taking capacity, child watch phone; and hands-free devices (Bluetooth).

B. School or school events

Hours that make up school day, e.g. from 8:10 a.m. until 2:45 p.m., during students' individual courses or during the entire period of the elementary school day including school-provided transportation to and from curricular activities and extracurricular activities, including field trips.

C. Recess

Time periods designated in elementary school for exercise or outside activity regardless of whether or not it is designated as instructional time by the school

D. Lunch time

Time period elementary schools designated for lunch.

E. Parent/legal guardian

Person(s) who has legal responsibility for the child's education

F. Individualized suspicion

Information that individual has violated policy; generally required for constitutional search (including personal belongings); exceptions are possible when privacy interests implicated in search are minimal and where other safeguards are available; not as exacting in the public school setting as in criminal law.

G. Reasonable suspicion

Reasonable suspicion need not be based on a single factor, but on totality of the Circumstances; aggregate effect of all information available at time of search; does not require absolute certainty, but only 'sufficient probability,' the sort of commonsense conclusion about human behavior upon which practical people are entitled to rely.

H. Instructional time

Hours during the school day designated by the school; cumulative hours and days during the course of the school year must equal 990 instructional hours and 180 instructional days, consistent with R277-419.

II. Use of Electronic Devices.

A. Students may NOT have electronic devices in their possession between 8:00 a.m. and the end of the school day or at school-sponsored extracurricular activities. Electronic devices may be kept in a student's backpack in the OFF position during the school day. Exceptions may be made, only in writing through the Director, for specific and documented medical reasons, unusual family situations, or specifically designated periods.

B. If students are found in possession of a prohibited electronic device, the device will be confiscated and can only be recovered by a parent/legal guardian at times designated by the school. Students may be subject to school discipline.

C. Students/parents are also on notice that confiscated electronic devices are subject to search by school administrators.

D. The Ranches Academy may establish a warning schedule for student violations which all school employees shall follow. Exceptions will not be made for individual students or for specific time periods except for the most urgent or compelling of reasons or circumstances.

III. Exceptions to general electronic device policy shall be made consistent with school policies, but in the judgment and discretion of the Director. Exceptions will only be made for compelling circumstances, and only if offered expressly by the parent/requestor.

A. Medical reasons

The Ranches Academy administrators may give specific permission for written parental requests for students to possess electronic devices during the regular school day (or instructional time) for specific and documented medical reasons.

B. Parent request

A parent may request an exception from this policy for a limited time period and only upon showing of a documented and substantial need which cannot be satisfied by other means. Exceptions may be granted at the sole discretion of the school principal or his designee and may be rescinded by the principal at any time.

C. Teacher permission

Teachers may allow for limited use of electronic devices subject to prior written approval by the school principal. Use must be for a defined period of time and directly related to an instructional activity. Permission may be rescinded effective immediately if students are found to be in violation of the policy outside of the designated class time.

D. Emergency

Emergency use of electronic devices shall be limited to the provisions of this policy, e.g. to protect the safety of the student, other students, school employees during the limited period of the emergency.

IV. Consequences for Violation of Policy.

A. Students will not be given warnings before being subject to the provisions of this policy. Parents and students are expected to be familiar with and to act consistent with the policy at all times. Students may be entitled to a warning by teachers for violations prior to discipline or confiscation of the device.

B. Only parents/legal guardians may retrieve electronic devices belonging to their children. They may reclaim devices on school days between 7:45 a.m. and 3:30p.m. or upon appointment with the Director. Devices may only be maintained by the school for four weeks after which time the devices may be donated to local charitable organizations. If devices are donated, all personal information shall be cleared by the school/school district prior to the donation. The school is not responsible for lost, theft or security of confiscated devices.

C. A school may impose other consequences for a student's violation of the electronic device policy only following notice to the school community. Such penalties are not exhaustive and more than one penalty may be imposed, if warranted.

Such penalties may include:

loss of electronic device privileges

disciplinary letter

in-school suspension

suspension

loss of extracurricular or honor privileges or recognition

If students are defiant and will not cooperate with school administrators and/or will not surrender electronic device(s), the designated school administrator may take appropriate action for the safety and well being of the student and other students or employees at the school. The school principal or designee shall notify a parent immediately of additional penalties.

V. Notice to Students and Parents of Policy

A. Parents and students shall receive annual written notice of a school's electronic device policies. Written notice may be satisfied by posting the policy on the school's website, publishing

the policy in a school handbook or directory, sending the policy to the student's home or any other reasonable means.

B. Parents and students shall receive annual notice of the policy; parents and students shall receive notice of changes in the school school policy in a timely manner and through reasonable means. A copy of the most current policy shall always be available in the main office of the school and shall be posted online on the school website, if a school has a website.

C. The Ranches Academy may require that parents return a copy of the policy with their signature indicating that they have had access to the policy.

D. Information to parents should include exceptions to the policy and potential consequences for students.

E. Information to parents shall provide clear information of how best to contact students during school hours or activities, in lieu of immediate contact by electronic device.

F. Students and parents shall be notified that law enforcement may be contacted, at school's discretion, if circumstances warrant such contact.

VI. Confiscated Electronic Devices.

A. Only licensed school personnel (unless other employees are specifically identified in policy) may confiscate student electronic devices.

B. Licensed school employees are discouraged from searching student electronic devices except with "reasonable suspicion" that would warrant a search. Educators who confiscate an electronic device in accordance with this policy may search the device based on their "reasonable suspicion" that the student has violated this policy. Such a search may include a review of text messages, photo files, and recent, missed, or dialed calls.

C. Licensed school employees may search an electronic device if the device is found by the employee for the limited purpose of determining the device's owner.

D. The Ranches Academy will do its best to guard and protect confiscated electronic devices, but are not responsible for loss, damage, theft.

E. The Ranches Academy will make a good faith effort to notify parent(s) that electronic device is in school's possession. Parents will be expected to retrieve confiscated devices within seven school days. Unclaimed devices cleared of personal data will be donated after four weeks.

VII. Other Provisions.

A. Picture taking or recording by students is strictly forbidden in school or school activity private areas, such as bathrooms.

B. Students bring electronic devices on school property or to school activities at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged electronic equipment.

C. Students are strictly responsible for their own electronic devices. If devices are borrowed or taken and misused by non-owners, device owners are jointly responsible for the misuse or policy violation(s).

D. Students and parents should be informed and understand that confiscated electronic devices may be subject to search by school officials.

E. A student's penalties for violation(s) of an electronic device policy provision may vary depending upon the intentional nature of the violation, other disciplinary actions the student may have received and specific circumstances of the violation.