

POLICY

Queen Anne’s County Public Schools

BOE Resolution Number: 051-2010

POLICY TITLE: Portable Communication Devices on QACPS Property	
ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:	
POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY: Students	

I. Purpose The Queen Anne’s County Board of Education acknowledges that portable communication devices may add to the well being of students, however the Board also recognizes the possibility that these devices may distract or disrupt the education environment. Therefore limited use of portable communication devices will be permitted but must strictly follow the prescribed guidelines.

A. Definition:

1. A portable communication device means any device carried, worn or transported by an individual to receive or communicate messages. Such devices may include but are not limited to portable pagers, hand held radios, cellular telephones, and any personal communication device which may or may not have the capability to take photographs of any kind and/or provides for a wireless, unfiltered connection to the internet. This definition will also include any new technology developed for similar purposes.
2. Public school property means any Queen Anne’s County Public School grounds, building, and buses.
3. Guidelines are those procedures designed to ensure that portable communication devices do not disrupt the learning environment.
4. Regular instructional hours are defined as the beginning of the opening bell of the school day and concluding at the dismissal bell at the end of the school day. They also include after-school and weekend instructional activities as well as Saturday School.

B. Exemptions with the permission of the principal:

1. Students with disabilities using activated portable communication devices for medical reasons as designated by a physician.

C. Responsibility/Liability: Queen Anne’s County Public Schools will assume no responsibility or liability for loss, theft, damage or destruction of any portable communication devices.

II. POSSESSION OF PORTABLE COMMUNICATION DEVICES ON QUEEN ANNE’S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL PROPERTY

The procedures for ensuring that portable communication devices do not disrupt the learning environment in Queen Anne’s County Schools are as follows:

Any staff member having knowledge of unauthorized possession or use of a portable communication

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device by a student on Queen Anne's County Public School property shall promptly report this information to the Principal/designee. Under no circumstances are students permitted to use portable communication devices on Queen Anne's County Public Schools property or Queen Anne's County Public Schools sponsored activities or events in order to transmit any text or images that are obscene, pornographic, illegal, profane, violate academic policies, or invade another's privacy. This includes "sexting" (the sharing of explicit or otherwise sexually provocative photos). This also includes the possession of inappropriate digital contact.

Elementary Schools

- A. Elementary school students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices while on Queen Anne's County Public School property or while attending any elementary school activities. School office phones are available for those students who need to contact parents.

Middle Schools

- A. Middle school students are not permitted to possess or use portable communication devices while on Queen Anne's County Public School property or while attending any middle school activities. School office phones are available for those students who need to contact parents.

High Schools

- A. High school students may possess portable communication devices during the school day in accordance with the following regulations:
 - 1. Written authorization from the parent/legal custodian or eligible student (18 years and older) to a school administrator indicating that the student is in possession of the portable communication device. Each letter will be kept on file during each school year (includes summer school). A student may not have the portable communication device in his/her possession without this written authorization and administrative approval.
 - 2. Prior to entering the school building, the portable communication device must be turned off.
 - 3. During regular instructional hours portable communication devices must be turned off, secured and out of sight.

High school students involved in after-school and weekend instructional activities including Saturday school may not use electronic communication devices in the area of the activity from the beginning of the activity until the end of the activity.

- B. After regular school hours/general dismissal, cell phones may be used if students are participating in non-academic activities – e.g. athletics, clubs, drama, etc. If students are participating in an after-school academic activity, portable communication devices may be used with the permission of the activity's sponsor. If traveling to or from a school-sponsored activity via bus, cellular phones may be used with the sponsor's/coach's permission.
- C. During regular bus transportation to and from school, high school students may possess portable

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communication devices but the devices must be turned off, secured and out of sight.

D. During bus transportation to and from athletic events or other school sponsored events, high school students may use cell phones only after receiving permission from the athletic coach or the principal/designee.

III. Any student in violation of the policy and procedures regarding portable communication devices will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- The first offense – confiscation of portable communication device for one (1) day and parent must pick up the communication device, with a conference.
- The second offense -- confiscation of the communication device, and student must attend Saturday School or after school detention. The communication device will be returned only to the parent at the completion of the consequence and with a conference.
- The third offense – One day out-of-school suspension and loss of privileges to have a portable communication device for remainder of the day. The portable communication device will be confiscated and returned only to parent at the end of the suspension and with a conference.
- The fourth offense will result in a three day suspension. The student will not be allowed to have a portable communication device on school property for the remainder of the year.

Any subsequent violation may result in additional disciplinary action or loss of school privileges (e.g. parking permit, admission to school functions). This policy is to be reviewed with the students at the beginning of each school year. This policy will be revisited by the Board for evaluation and revision annually.

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POLICY TRACKING FORM

Policy Action Dates					
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Reformat	January 06, 2010				

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References		
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