



BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE CODE G6RP-CP: MIDDLE SCHOOL CELL PHONE PROCEDURES

Burlington School District Middle School Cell Phone Procedures

Summary

After finding that students continue to struggle with the abuse of smartphones and social media and that the majority of incidents of bullying, hazing, harassment, and other conflicts between students are connected either directly or indirectly to social media, Burlington School District (BSD) has procedures in place to limit the use of cell phone usage by middle school students. The procedures, which limit the presence and use of cell phones during the school day, make our school communities safer and help keep students and staff focused on the reasons we are at school: to learn, build relationships with others, and be fully present and engaged members of our school community.

Procedures

Cell phones are not to be used by middle school students during the school day.

If a staff member sees a cell phone in use *at any time during the school day between 8:00 am and 2:55 pm*, the phone will be collected. "In use" means a phone is powered on and visible (in a hand, on a desk, at a locker, etc.). The phone will be sent to the office with the owner's name, logged into our records, and stored securely in the office safe for at least the remainder of the school day).

If a student opts to bring a cell phone to school, the phone must be powered off from 8 am-2:55 pm. Students have two options for how to store it during the school day:

- 1) Keep the (powered off) phone in a backpack OR locker for the entire school day.
- 2) Check the (powered off) phone into the locked phone storage locker in the main office for the day.

If a student or family is not comfortable with either of these options, the student should leave the phone at home. Our middle schools encourage students to use locks to secure their personal belongings in their lockers; schools keep locks on hand for students unable to bring their own but are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Common student and family questions

What happens if a student is found using a phone during class time multiple times?

- **First collection:** Families/caregivers will be notified that the guidelines were violated for the first time and the student will be able to retrieve their phone from the main office at the end of the day.
- **Second collection:** Families/caregivers can retrieve the phone at the end of the day OR students can retrieve the phone themselves after the final bell of the next school day. (For a Friday violation, this would mean a caregiver would have to pick it up on Friday, or the student can wait until the end of the day on Monday to retrieve it themselves.)
- **3+ collection:** Families/caregivers must schedule a conference with administration before retrieving the phone, at which time it will be determined whether the phone stays at home for at least a week (five school days), or be stored in the main office phone locker during the school day for at least a week.

Ongoing challenges with phone use or instances of substantial or repeated conflict around storing or turning over the phone to staff may result in a longer-term agreement between the school and family.

What if there’s an emergency or schedule/ride issue and I need to call home?

Students can always ask for a pass to the main office, where they can call home from the office landline that we have for student use. We can look up phone numbers for students as necessary and provide a space to talk to caregivers privately if needed.

What about lunchtime and transitions?

Cell phones will not be permitted in the cafeteria during lunchtime, and will not be permitted during passing periods. BSD middle schools are phone-free spaces during school hours, in accordance with District procedures and researched best practices.

What if I have an accommodation that involves phone use?

We will seek to meet accommodations related to listening to music via the use of Chromebooks and school-issued headphones or personal headphones. If there is a health plan that involves the use of or access to a cell phone, staff will be made aware, however, the misuse of a cell phone will result in a review of the plan and a discussion of how/if needs can be met in ways that do not involve the ongoing possession of a cell phone during the school day.

What if a student refuses to turn over their phone when directed by staff?

If a student refuses a teacher’s request, a school administrator (principal, assistant principal, etc.) will be contacted and will come to the classroom to retrieve the phone. Students can be given the option of putting their phones in the storage locker themselves if they do not wish anyone else to handle it. If a student refuses an administrator’s request, the school will contact the parents/guardians and assign the consequence established for 3+ confiscations (see page 1).

Students: If you are found with your phone when you shouldn’t have it, please don’t argue, debate, or do anything to make the issue bigger; please just hand over your phone or bring it to the phone locker, let it be safely locked in the main office, and carry on with your day.

What if I am not using my phone, but a teacher sees that I have my phone in a pocket rather than in my locker, backpack, or the school phone storage locker?

This is a violation of the phone procedure since phones should not enter classrooms, the cafeteria, bathrooms, or any other location besides the designated spaces (backpack, locker, office storage) during the school day. A teacher cannot and will not conduct a search looking for phones, but if a phone is readily visible in your possession, the teacher can remind/direct you to take your phone to your locker or store it in your backpack and should write you a hall pass to do so. If you refuse to store the phone appropriately when asked by staff, the staff member will notify administration, so that an administrator can support you in getting the phone to an acceptable location and contact your caregiver, if necessary.

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