

BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE

PROCEDURE CODE G6RP-HSCP: HIGH SCHOOL CELL PHONE PROCEDURES

Summary

High school students struggle with high levels of distraction and misuse of smartphones and social media; furthermore, conflicts, bullying, and harassment issues between students during the school day can often be traced directly or indirectly to phone use during the school day. With that in mind, BSD has adopted new cell phone guidelines for Burlington High School, effective at the beginning of the 2024-2025 academic year. The procedure, which limits the presence and use of cell phones during the school day, is supported by current research about healthy use of phones, makes our school community safer, and helps students focus on the reasons we're at school: to learn, to build relationships with others, and to be fully present members of our school community.

Procedures

Cell phones are not to be used by high school students during class time. All classes a student is enrolled in are considered "class time", including study halls and learning labs.

Cell phones and wireless earphones are not needed in the classroom and do not support learning. In each class, students will be assigned a numbered wall storage pocket. If students bring a phone to school, they have three options during class time:

- 1) Put the (muted) phone in your assigned classroom pocket; or
- 2) Keep the (muted) phone in a backpack for the entire class; or
- 3) Check the (muted) phone into the locked phone storage locker in the main office for the day.

If a staff member observes a cell phone in use during class time (in the classroom, hallway, stairwell, etc.), the phone will be collected for the remainder of the day. "In use" means a phone is powered on and visible (in a hand, on a desk, at a locker, etc.). It will be sent to the office with the owner's name, and stored securely in the office phone storage box. The student owner will need to pick it up after the final bell of their last class of the day.

If a student or family is not comfortable with any of these options, the student should leave the phone at home. The school and its staff are not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Common Student and Family Questions

What happens if I am found using a phone during class time multiple times?

All collections of phones in the main office will be logged and tracked over time.

- **First collection:** The student will need to retrieve their phone from the main office at the end of their school day.
- **Second collection:** The student will need to retrieve their phone from the main office at the end of their school day, and their parent/guardian will be notified.
- **3+ collection:** Family/student/admin conference to develop a phone management contract; the phone will be expected to either remain at home OR be stored in the main office phone locker during the school day for at least two (2) school days. 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.

Can students bring or use phones during trips to the restroom, water fountain, etc.?

No, students must leave their phone behind in class when excused to use the bathroom, get water, etc. If a staff member sees a phone in use in the hallway, restroom, etc. during class time, the phone will be collected and stored in a secure phone locker for the remainder of the day.

What about lunch and transitions?

Phone use during lunch is permitted. Please use phones responsibly, in ways that follow our community expectations, during lunch and passing times. This includes adhering to Student Handbook rules around photographing or recording others.

Phones are also permitted during passing time between classes. However, if a student is tardy and using a phone in a hallway after passing period is over, or found in the hallway using a phone when scheduled to be in class, the phone will be collected and stored in the main office phone locker and logged.

What if there’s an emergency/issue and a student and guardian need to reach each other?

Students may use their phones and wireless headphones during passing periods and at lunchtime. If a student feels a call cannot wait until passing period or lunch, they can tell their teacher that they need to call home, and ask them for a pass to the main office, where they can call on an office landline. We can look up phone numbers if a student can’t remember them, and provide students with a quiet space to talk to their parent/guardian if privacy is needed. Parents who need to reach their student can do so quickly by calling the BHS Main Office at (802) 864-8411. Office staff will quickly get families in touch with their students.

If it is not an emergency, you can text or email your student and they will be able to read and respond during passing periods or lunch.

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

If you refuse to store the phone appropriately when asked by staff, the staff member will notify the BHS administration team, so that an administrator or Student Support Team member can support you in getting the phone to an acceptable location and, if necessary, contact your caregiver. If a student refuses an administrator’s request, administration will contact the parents/guardians and assign the consequence established for 3+ confiscations (see page 1), which may include asking the parent to come in to pick up the device. *We strongly encourage students to turn over their phones without argument or debate, if found with it in use, so that it can be addressed straightforwardly and safely secured in the main office for the remainder of their school day.*

Can teachers still allow students to use phones for educational purposes?

All BHS teachers are expected to respect and enforce the BHS Cell Phone Procedures during class time, but may still allow students to utilize their devices for specific instructional purposes (such as for translation, as a calculator, for filming or photography, etc.). Please note, however, that BHS is a 1:1 school, meaning that all students have Chromebooks that are able to fulfill these same functions. With this in mind, teacher-sanctioned phone use should be rare.

What if a student has a medical condition or an IEP that involves the routine use of a personal device?

If a personal device is part of a medical response/management plan or an IEP, that will be permitted. However, if a student with such an exception is found to be abusing access to their personal device, a parent conference or team meeting will be scheduled to examine other options or to develop a clear agreement about phone use to prevent further misuse.

Clerical Information

BSD Version:	BSD G6RP-HSCP Procedure
Date Adopted:	August 1, 2024
Legal Reference(s):	N/A
Policy Reference:	GR6 - Responsible Computer, Network & Internet Use