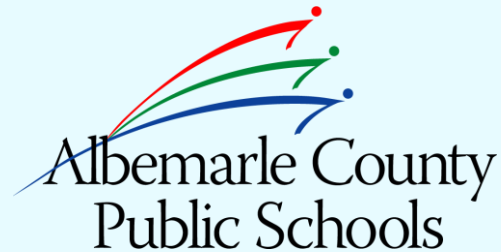


Policy JFCP

Personal Communication

Device-Free Education

in Albemarle County Public Schools



Vision

Our learners are engaged in authentic, challenging, and relevant learning experiences, becoming lifelong contributors and leaders in our dynamic and diverse society.

Mission

Working together as a team, we will end the predictive value of race, class, gender, and special capacities for our children's success through high-quality teaching and learning for all. We seek to build relationships with families and communities to ensure that every student succeeds. We will know every student.

Goal 1: Thriving Students

ACPS will facilitate learning experiences grounded in high expectations, networks of care, and student curiosity to ensure academic and social-emotional development for all students while eliminating opportunity, access and achievement gaps.

Values

Equity

We will provide every student with the level of support necessary to thrive.

Excellence

We will mitigate barriers and provide opportunities for every student to be academically successful.

Family and Community

We will engage with and share the responsibility for student success with families and community partners.

Wellness

We will support the physical and emotional health of our students and staff.

Policy

Personal Communication Device-Free Education

Studies indicate that students who use cell phones or other personal communication devices in class learn less and earn lower grades. The issue extends beyond temporary distraction; substantial personal communication device and social media use can have detrimental, cumulative and lasting effects on adolescents' levels of focus and concentration. Accordingly, establishing a personal communication device-free environment in Albemarle County Public Schools is necessary to ensure all students are free to learn in a healthy and focused educational setting.

Objective

Starting January 1, 2025, Albemarle County Public Schools will implement a **“Personal Communication Device-Free Education”** to create a focused, distraction-free learning environment.

Specific Procedures Under Executive Order 33

Under Executive Order 33, schools are required to develop specific procedures to address key provisions related to student cell phone use and communication protocols. The following areas are highlighted for ensuring compliance with the Executive Order while promoting a conducive learning environment.

5 Areas of Focus

- 1) Device Storage
- 2) Exemption for Medical Needs
- 3) Emergency Communication Protocols
- 4) Implementation of Bell to Bell
- 5) Device Use Under Special Circumstances



Device Storage

State Guidance

Requires designated storage during school hours to minimize distractions.

Current School Procedures and Implementation

Middle Schools: Use of lockers, backpacks, and Yondr Pouches.

High Schools: Employ storage options including lockers and backpacks.

2024/25 Transition

Continued review of storage options and Yondr pouch implementation.



Exemptions for Medical Needs

State Guidance

Allows device access for students with medical conditions as per IEP or 504 Plans.

Current School Procedures and Implementation

Families may request exemptions utilizing existing processes through school administration and case managers.

2024/25 Transition

Continued adaptation for students with medical needs, in compliance with relevant plans.



Emergency Communication Protocols

State Guidance

Establishes protocols for parent-student communication during emergencies.

Current School Procedures and Implementation

Protocols for emergency response scenarios; personal communication devices are restricted per policy.

2024/25 Transition

Crisis plans will standardize communication channels, excluding student phone use as part of crisis management plans.



Implementation of Bell-to-Bell Policy

State Guidance

“Bell-to-Bell” policy requires phones be stored during all instructional hours.

Current School Procedures and Implementation

Middle Schools: Implemented “Away for the Day” approach.

High Schools: Require phone storage during Block to Block class time.

2024/25 Transition

Enhanced enforcement of Bell to Bell, while focusing on best practices and compliance for Bell to Bell implementation.



Device Use Under Special Circumstances

State Guidance

Consistent policy application during off-campus events and during school transportation.

Current School Procedures and Implementation

Transportation: Students may possess a cellular telephone, smart phone, tablet, or other communications device on school buses, provided that the use of the device does not distract or creates an unsafe environment while the students are on the bus or school transportation vehicle. School bus drivers may direct the student to put their phone away or cease use if it does become a distraction.

Off-Campus Events: Adheres to school guidelines with exceptions as needed.

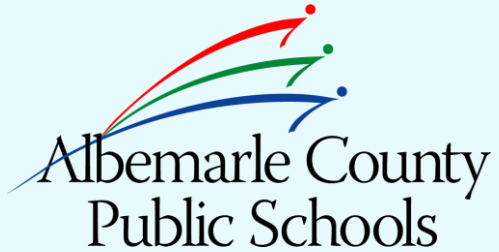
2024/25 Transition

Schools and school staff will adhere to the same guidelines as established within the school building for off-campus events with exceptions made by staff related to the use of phones as an instructional tool at the event or as a recording device for photos, videos, etc, as approved by school staff.

Next Steps

- Continuation of Monthly Cell Phone Committee Meetings.
- Feedback on current and future state with students, staff, and families.
- Development of Professional Development for teachers to include Bell to Bell instructional strategies along with use of computer translation tools with English Language Learners.
- Division-level communication as to the “why”.
- Working with high school principals on personal communication device-free implementation during school transition and lunch times.





Policies IIBE & GDA

Responsible Use of Technology

Background:

- GDA and IIBE revisions made ahead of the regular 5 year revision timeline due to:
 - Changing technology landscape
 - Student and teacher needs
 - New guidelines from the VDOE (VA Dept. of Education) and CoSN (Consortium of School Networking)



Goals & Highlights of the Changes:

Goals:

- Improved readability
- Create usable document as part of the ACPS Digital Citizenship Curriculum
- Reorganized by priority and relevance to students and staff
- Accommodate language more aligned with our current technology systems and the new cell phone policy

Highlights:

- Name of the policy changed to emphasize responsibility
- Different approach to students bringing their own devices for use at school
- Regulations for Students (as part of IIBE) changed to active statements for student use and differentiated by elementary and secondary



Questions/Discussion

