

REGULATION

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: BLB, IGS, IGT-RA, ILA-RA, IQB-RA, JFA, JFA-RA, JGA, JGA-RB, JGB-RA, JHF, JHF-RA, KBA-RA

Responsible Office: Division of Technology Services, Division of School Leadership and Improvement, Division of Teaching and Learning

Personal Mobile Devices

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the possession and use of personal mobile devices by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students

II. DEFINITION

- A. A *personal mobile device* (PMD), for the purposes of this regulation, has three distinguishing features:
1. MCPS does not own or issue the device.
 2. The device has the capability to obtain an Internet, wi-fi, or cellular connection to send and receive data.
 3. The device has the capability to capture sound and images/video. Examples of PMDs may include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, e-readers, smart watches, tablets, wearable technology, video and audio recorders, and gaming devices that meet all three criteria.
- B. *Principal/designee* refers to the administrator responsible for a school or office, as appropriate.
- C. *MCPS property* is defined as any school or other MCPS facility, including grounds owned or operated by MCPS; buses and other vehicles owned, operated, or hired by MCPS; and the facility and/or grounds of any MCPS-sponsored activity involving students.
- D. *Student Day* starts at the time that students arrive and ends at the time of dismissal. Student Day also includes co-curricular and MCPS-sponsored extracurricular

activities and other instructional times for students attending extended-day and extended-year instructional programs.

III. BACKGROUND

The federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requires schools to establish protective measures to limit minors' access to harmful internet content. Personal mobile devices at school – independently capable of obtaining an internet, wi-fi, or cellular connection to send and receive data – bypass MCPS protective measures and are outside MCPS's efforts to limit minors' access to and transmittal of harmful content through technological means.

Further, apart from use for legitimate educational purposes for instruction, student use of internet content and social media during the student day can disrupt instruction and student learning. Establishing the time, place, and manner for students to use personal devices is one strategy for preserving the integrity of the MCPS teaching and learning process by placing reasonable, age-appropriate restrictions on student use of personal mobile devices on MCPS property.

IV. SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

- A. In compliance with federal law, MCPS uses filtering and other technological measures to limit students' ability to access harmful internet content.
- B. All MCPS equipment, the MCPS network, and students' MCPS network accounts are the property of MCPS that must be used for educational purposes only and can be monitored, logged, and archived.
- C. MCPS monitors and reserves the right to investigate all PMDs and PMD activity on the MCPS network.
- D. Using a PMD in a manner that causes disruption to the MCPS network or operations is prohibited for both employees and students. Students and employees may be disciplined for uses of a PMD to alter records, destroy electronic property, or other relevant disciplinary offenses.

V. RESPONSIBILITY/LIABILITY

MCPS will assume no responsibility or liability for loss, theft, or damage to a device or for the unauthorized use of any PMD.

VI. PROCEDURES – STUDENT PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES ON MCPS PROPERTY**A. Possession of Personal Mobile Devices**

1. Students may possess PMDs on MCPS property and at MCPS-sponsored activities.
2. Students using a PMD to send or receive data on MCPS property are required to comply with requirements stated in law, Board policies, MCPS regulations and rules (hereafter referred to as “MCPS rules”).
3. PMDs may be confiscated by school authorities if they are used in a manner inconsistent with MCPS rules, as set forth in MCPS Regulation JGB-RA, *Search and Seizure*.

B. Authorized Use of Personal Mobile Devices

Students are subject to the following rules about using PMDs on MCPS property. Students are responsible for ensuring that their PMDs are turned off and kept out of sight during times of unauthorized use.

1. Principals/designees’ discretion to authorize uses of PMDs is as follows:
 - a) Principals may temporarily suspend the use of PMDs on MCPS property if they are used in a manner inconsistent with MCPS rules.
 - b) Principals may authorize instructional use in collaboration with the school leadership team.
 - c) The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) prohibits student and staff use of PMDs in standardized testing environments, where they could be considered a test security risk.
 - i) MCPS Regulation ILA-RA, *Assessments with Security and Reporting Requirements*, specifies certain exemptions that permit students to use PMDs during standardized tests.
 - ii) The principal/designee must seek the Division of Shared Accountability’s approval for uses of PMDs during assessments with security and reporting requirements.
 - d) The principal, in consultation with school staff, may approve the use of a PMD to provide an accommodation for a student who does not

have an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan, unless such uses are restricted in Regulation ILA-RA.

- e) Principals shall consult with the Division of School Leadership and Improvement (DSLII) and the Division of Technology Services (DTS) prior to authorizing uses of devices that resemble, but do not meet all criteria for a personal mobile device, as defined above. The DSLII and DTS shall collaborate to establish guidance for commercial innovations in child-appropriate communication devices that may not meet all functional criteria of PMDs as defined above.
- f) Principals shall coordinate with the Division of Communication to communicate credible, public information about emerging incidents in a timely and complete manner, as set forth in Regulation KBA-RA, *Public Information*.

2. Bus Use

Students may use PMDs while riding to or from school or school-sponsored activities on MCPS buses or other vehicles owned, operated or hired by MCPS, as long as such use does not impact the safe operation of the bus and complies with MCPS rules.

3. Elementary and Middle Schools

- a. Elementary and middle school students may use PMDs before and after the student day.
- b. Elementary and middle school students are not permitted to use PMDs during instructional periods, lunch periods, or between classes/during transitional time.

4. High Schools

High school students may use PMDs before and after the student day, between classes/transitional time, and during the student lunch periods.

VII. RESPONSIBLE USE GUIDELINES

- A. Students will avoid using technology in such a way that disrupts the activities of other students and employees or violates MCPS rules.
- B. Any student whose conduct while using a PMD violates MCPS rules is subject to disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct in MCPS*.
- C. Board Policy JHF, *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation*, prohibits cyberbullying, including misconduct away from MCPS property that may be subject to disciplinary action when there is a connection back to the school setting, regardless of whether the instructional environment is in person or virtual; the conduct creates a risk of harm to other students while they are at school; or the conduct interferes with the educational environment.
- D. Responsible use guidelines established MCPS Regulation IGT-RA, *User Responsibilities for Computer Systems, Electronic Information, and Network Security*, apply to students using PMDs on MCPS property as follows:
 - 1. Students are responsible for ensuring that their PMDs are managed securely at all times.
 - 2. Information may not be communicated using a PMD if it violates the privacy of others, jeopardizes the health or safety of students or employees, is obscene or libelous, causes disruption of school activities or MCPS operations, perpetrates academic dishonesty, or violates the security of MCPS computer systems, related technology, or electronic information.
 - a) The privacy of self and others includes, but is not limited to, keeping students' personal information and the personal information of others private (including grades, home/mobile phone number, mailing address, and user passwords).
 - b) The prohibition against academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, altering student records, or distributing assessments.
 - 3. Students will use the MCPS network productively, appropriately, and for school-related purposes.
 - 4. Students shall not change or delete electronic information belonging to others.

5. Students will report inappropriate use of technology immediately.

Related Sources:

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C §1232g; Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), 20 U.S.C. §1232h, 34 CFR Part 98, (2000 and Supp. IV 2004); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. Sec. 794; Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. 12131 et seq.; Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), 47 U.S.C. §254(h)(5)(B)-(C), 254(l); Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA), 15 U.S.C.6501-6505, 16 CFR Part 312; Public Information Act of Maryland, Ann. Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article §§4-101 through 4-601; Maryland Student Data Privacy Act of 2015, Ann. Code of Maryland, Education Article, §4-131, 7-308, and 7-443; Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.03.02.03.B(8), §13A.06.05.02-.04, .06, and §13A.08.01.14; Maryland Digital Learning Standards, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), May 2019; Technology Education Standards: Grades 6-12, MSDE, January 2016; Health and Safety Best Practice Guidelines: Digital Devices, MSDE, July, 2019; International Society for Technology in Education Standards Administrators, Education Leaders, Educators, and Students

Regulation History: New Regulation, November 6, 1992; revised July 23, 1997; reviewed July 20, 1998; revised May 24, 2000; revised October 16, 2001; revised August 15, 2002; revised July 11, 2003; revised December 22, 2005; revised June 12, 2007; revised October 23, 2012; revised June 28, 2017; revised May 2, 2022; revised January 26, 2024; revised May 9, 2025 with technical updates to directory information that are effective July 1, 2025.

MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. The Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.*

It is the policy of the state of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not
 - (a) discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
 - (b) refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
 - (c) discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.**

Please note that contact information and federal, state, or local content requirements may change between editions of this document and shall supersede the statements and references contained in this version. Please see the online version for the most up-to-date information at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/nondiscrimination.

For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students***	For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff***
Director of Student Welfare and Compliance Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 15 West Gude Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 SWC@mcpsmd.org	Human Resource Compliance Officer Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For student requests for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	For staff requests for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act
Section 504 Coordinator Office of School Support and Improvement Well-Being and Student Services 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 257, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3109 504@mcpsmd.org	ADA Compliance Coordinator Office of Human Resources and Development Department of Compliance and Investigations 45 West Gude Drive, Suite 2500, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For inquiries or complaints about sex discrimination under Title IX, including sexual harassment, against students or staff***	
Title IX Coordinator Office of District Operations Student Welfare and Compliance 15 West Gude Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 TitleIX@mcpsmd.org	

*This notification complies with the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended.

**This notification complies with the Code of Maryland Regulations Section 13A.01.07.

***Discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as the following: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Baltimore Field Office, GH Fallon Federal Building, 31 Hopkins Plaza, Suite 1432, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR), William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, MD 21202, 410-767-8600, 1-800-637-6247, mccr@maryland.gov; Agency Equity Officer, Office of Equity Assurance and Compliance, Office of the Deputy State Superintendent of Operations, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-2595, oeac.msde@maryland.gov; or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), The Wanamaker Building, 100 Penn Square East, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19107, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, by contacting the MCPS Office of Communications at 240-740-2837, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or PIO@mcpsmd.org. Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 301-637-2958 (VP) mcpsinterpretingservices@mcpsmd.org, or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org.