



# South Carolina VIRTUAL CHARTER SCHOOL

Est. 2008

## Policy on Personal Electronic Device Usage During Instructional Time

The purpose of this policy is to foster an effective and distraction-free virtual learning environment by encouraging limited use of personal electronic devices during instructional time. By minimizing distractions, this policy aims to enhance student focus and engagement, thereby supporting the development of college and career-ready skills outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. This approach promotes meaningful interactions, peer collaboration, and the cultivation of essential life skills that contribute to student success in school and beyond.

This policy aligns with South Carolina state law, General Appropriations Bill, H. 5100 of 2024, Proviso 1.103, which requires:

*To receive state funds allocated for State Aid to Classrooms, a school district shall implement a policy adopted by the State Board of Education that prohibits access to personal electronic communication devices by students during the school day. For purposes of this provision, a personal electronic communication device is considered to be a device not authorized for classroom use by a student, utilized to access the Internet, Wi-Fi, or cellular telephone signals.*

### I. Definitions

- A. "Personal electronic device", hereinafter referred to as "device," means any device utilized to access the internet, Wi-Fi, cellular telephone signals, or to capture images or video. This includes but is not limited to cell phones, smartwatches, tablets, and gaming devices. This does not include the laptop or desktop computer that the student uses to complete virtual school work.
- B. "Instructional time" is defined as any period of time during which students are actively engaged in live online classes or virtual lessons, including both synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- C. "Access" is defined as viewing, holding, wearing, or otherwise using a device for communication, internet access, gaming, recording, or any other function commonly associated with devices. During instructional time, devices should only be used for educational purposes as directed by the school.
- D. "Authorized for Classroom Use" is defined as the use of a personal electronic device explicitly permitted by the teacher to fulfill a standards-aligned educational objective that cannot be completed using the student's primary school device. Instructions for the use of devices that may be permitted for a particular course or

subject will be reviewed by the instructor during orientation or documented in the syllabus.

## II. Policy Implementation and Enforcement

- A. During instructional time, students are to refrain from use of personal electronic devices, unless authorized for classroom use. Students should avoid using these devices for non-educational activities including, but not limited to, gaming, social media, or texting to maintain focus and minimize distractions.
- B. If explicitly required by a student's IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan, the student shall be allowed to access their personal electronic device for medically or educationally necessary purposes described and required for administration of the IEP, Medical Plan, or 504 plan.
- C. Exceptions to the above policy include devices used for authorized classroom use including educational applications, research, or activities that are academic in nature at the sole discretion of the teacher.
- D. If a student violates the preceding guidelines during instructional time, the student will be subject to progressive consequences as outlined below:
  - 1. First infraction: Verbal warning and reminder of policy
  - 2. Second infraction: Notification to parent/guardian/Learning Coach
  - 3. Repeated infractions will result in students being placed on Academic Probation as outlined in the student handbook.

*This policy goes into effect beginning January 2025 and is SCVCS Board approved.*