

Shelby County Board of Education

4013

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CELL PHONES / PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the use of (1) cellular phones and other electronic communication devices purchased by the district for district business purposes; and (2) personal cellular phones and other electronic communication devices (a) granted access to the district's network; and (b) for personal use during work hours.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals authorized (1) for the use of cellular phones and other electronic communication devices that have a district-paid voice or data service plan; (2) access to the district's network; and (3) to use personal cellular phones and other electronic communication devices during work hours for personal matters.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Shelby County Schools recognizes that the use of cellular phones and other electronic communication devices may be required for the efficient and effective operation of the district and in emergency situations during work hours.

A. Use of Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices with a District-Paid Voice or Data Service Plan

The Board authorizes the purchase of service plans coverage to a limited number of individuals for the regular business use of cellular phones and other electronic communication devices (i.e., personal digital assistants and pagers)

- Service plan coverage of devices must be deemed essential for job performance and to the operation of the school system and must be approved by the Superintendent.
- Cellular phones and other electronic communication devices purchased by the district shall only be used for official school board business and shall not be used for personal purposes.
- Monthly charges for business related usage of service plans shall be paid by the district.

The district reserves the right to review and monitor usage of airtime service paid by the district, to investigate inappropriate use of resources, and to terminate privileges for use of service plans at any time for any reason without notice. Additionally, cell phone bills and/or usage of district paid devices and services may be subject to public and/or legal inspection under applicable Board policy and state and federal laws.^{1, 2, 3}

B. Non-District-Paid Voice or Data Service Plan Devices Granted Access to the District’s Network

Employees using his/her personal cellular phones and other electronic communication devices requiring access to the district’s network system must receive approval in accordance to guidelines established by the Superintendent.

C. Personal Cell Phones

While at work, employees should restrict the use of personal cell phones and other electronic communication devices so as not to interfere with his/her performance of duty, distract others, detract from the district’s image, present a safety hazard, or for any other reason deemed inappropriate.

D. Safety Provisions

The district prohibits the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices, whether for business or personal use, in conditions that may hinder the educational opportunities of students, endanger the health and/or safety of students, district employees, or others including but not limited to while transporting students, preparing/serving food, operating machinery, and on construction sites.

E. Contact with Students

District employees shall not contact students via telephone, email, text message, Twitter, social networking websites or other electronic communications, except regarding school related matters and as otherwise authorized by law, Board policy and/or administrative rules and regulations.

F. Sanctions

Violations of the policy and rules and regulations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. All individuals authorized to utilize a district paid service plan for cellular phones and other electronic communication devices are responsible for adhering to this policy.
- B. All employees utilizing personal cell phones and other electronic communication devices during work hours are responsible for adhering to this policy.
- C. Department heads for the offices responsible for IT and procurement are responsible for implementing this policy.
- D. The Superintendent is responsible for approving service plan coverage of devices deemed essential for job performance and to the operation of the school system; and for ensuring that this policy is followed.

Legal References:

1. Tennessee Public Records Act
2. Federal and TN Rules of Civil Procedure
3. IRS Reg. Sec. 1.274-5T(e)(1)

Cross References:

Administrative Rules and Regulations
CELL PHONES / PERSONAL COMMUNICATION
DEVICES

A. Use of Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices with a District-Paid Voice or Data Service Plan

1. Eligibility Criteria

District paid service plans for cellular phones and other electronic communication devices may be provided to eligible employees for use in conducting official business when determined to be in the best interest of the district. To be eligible for coverage under a district cellular phone and/or other electronic communication devices service plan, an employee must serve in the capacity of a director or above. Exceptions may be granted with approval from the Superintendent.

2. Process for Authorization of Request and Approval

The department heads and/or Regional Superintendents shall be responsible for identifying specific job functions that require use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices, and for submitting requests for district service plan coverage to the Chief Information Officer. Final approval shall be required by the Superintendent and/or his/her designee.

Cellular phones and other electronic devices eligible for coverage under a district paid service plan must be purchased by the district. The Chief Information Officer in collaboration with the department heads and/or Regional Superintendents submitting a request shall determine the best service plan to address business needs. Specific features and cost for usage of district

provided cell phones and other electronic communication devices shall be established by the Chief Information Officer.

3. Business Use

The district is financially responsible for the monthly charges for business related usage of district provided cellular phones and/or other electronic communication devices. Cellular phones and other electronic devices provided to employees shall be for use in conducting official district business only.

4. Monitoring and Internal Audit

Monthly reports of employee usage of portable electronic devices shall be provided by the office responsible for IT to department heads and the office responsible for internal audit to monitor, review and approve employee use and to ensure that the most cost-effective plan is utilized. Failure of the appropriate office and/or department heads to provide, monitor and review monthly reports may result in disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

Periodic audit reviews of cellular phone bills will be performed and documented by the office responsible for IT. A further review, along with physically verifying the actual devices, will be audited by the district's office responsible for internal audit annually.

5. Lost, Stolen or Damaged Devices

The employee shall be solely responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of district provided cell phones and/or other communication devices. Further it is the responsibility of the employee to timely report any incident of loss, theft, or damage of a device. Failure to report may result in loss of use or other disciplinary action.

B. Non-District-Paid Voice or Data Service Plan Devices Granted Access to the District's Network

1. Employees using non-district-paid voice or data service plans requiring access to the district's network system shall be required to submit a request to the appropriate department head in writing.
2. Employees granted access to the district's network system shall be required to sign and abide by guidelines established in the use agreement.

C. Separation from the District or Change in Job Requirements

Service plans for any cellular phone and/or other electronic communication device and access granted to the district's network system shall be cancelled by the Chief Information Officer when an employee no longer has a business need for the service or access.

District provided cell phones and other communication devices must be returned to the immediate supervisor when there is no longer a business need for the device and/or upon separation from the district.

D. Contact with Students

Employee contact with students via telephone, email, text message, Twitter, social networking websites or other electronic communications, should be limited to school related issues. Such contact, however, may be subject to the following exceptions: (a) communication with relatives and (b) emergency situations requiring such communication, in which case the employee shall notify his/her supervisor of the contact as soon as possible.