

Dear Wildcat Families,

Cell phones and similar electronic devices can be a distraction that may negatively affect learning, and these devices are used to intimidate and bully students. In response to these negative consequences, and using the guidance of Governor Youngkin's Executive Order 33, some changes are being made for next semester. On January 1, 2025, a new cellphone and personal electronic communication device policy for Rockbridge County Public Schools will go into effect. The primary change is that Rockbridge County High School students will power off and store away all electronic communication devices during the regular school day.

Some details of the policy are:

- A personal electronic communication device is any device capable of connecting to a smartphone, the internet, a cellular or Wi-Fi network, or directly connects to a similar device. Some examples are cellphones/smartphones, smart watches, headphones, earbuds, etc.
- At RCHS the regular school day is from the first bell at 8:25 until the dismissal bell at 3:25.
- A personal communication device is considered properly stored when the device is not carried on the student's person. Some options include a backpack/book bag, student locker, or other designated space in the classroom.
- There will be some exemptions to this policy when there is a verified need to have a cellphone, such as for medical, learning, or translation support. Students with these exemptions may only use communication devices for the verified need.
- Students may use communication devices at after school activities and on school buses as long the device is not disruptive or distracting.

Student consequences for not following the policy start with a warning, and are tiered to include parental involvement, loss of privilege to use devices, and in some cases students may face detention or suspension. A copy of the approved School Board Policy and a copy of our presentation to the students is included on the RCHS website:

<https://www.rockbridge.k12.va.us/RCHS> under RCHS Announcements and the Parents & Students tab.

Sincerely,

Michael Craft, Ed.D.  
Principal