match | Charter Public High School

MHS Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy

Match Charter Public High School ("MHS") is committed to maintaining a learning environment that promotes academic engagement, student well-being, meaningful relationships, and responsible technology use. Consistent with Massachusetts efforts to establish distraction-free, bell-to-bell school environments, MHS maintains school-day restrictions on student access to cell phones and other personal electronic devices.

The purpose of this policy is to reduce distractions, support student learning and social development, promote safe and productive learning spaces, and provide students with opportunities to develop appropriate independence and responsibility in their use of technology.

Bell-to-Bell Policy

For students in Grades 9–12, cell phones & electronic devices must **not** be accessible to or used by students during the school day, from the beginning of the school day through dismissal, except as specifically authorized under this policy or as required by an approved accommodation or emergency circumstance.

Students in Grades 9–12 are required to secure their cell phones at the beginning of the school day through one of the school's designated procedures:

- **Yondr:** Students may place their cell phones in the school's designated Yondr pouch at the beginning of the school day. The pouch must remain sealed and in the student's possession or in a location designated by the school until the end of the school day. Students will not be allowed to access their phones or unseal their pouch until dismal begins at 3:29 PM Monday through Thursday and 1:46 PM on Fridays
- **Administrative Storage:** Students may choose to turn their phone in to a school assigned dean or administrator for secure charging storage during the school day.
- Important Note: Once you opt into either option, it will remain the choice for the entire semester.

Students may not access, use, or possess an unsecured cell phone, tablet, smart watch or personal computer during the school day unless expressly authorized by a school administrator or otherwise permitted under an applicable accommodation or exception.

The restriction applies during both instructional and non-instructional portions of the school day, including passing periods, study periods, assemblies, and other school-sponsored activities occurring during the school day. Students may access cell phones when they leave the building while participating in off-campus lunch privileges.

At dismissal, students may retrieve or unlock their phones at established locations.

Each student who chooses to keep their cell phone on their person may be assigned a personal Yondr pouch for the school year. **Damaged or lost Yondr pouches will require the family to pay MHS a $40.00 replacement fee for a new pouch.** Students with outstanding Yondr pouch balances may be subject to restrictions on diploma issuance or promotion to the next grade level, consistent with applicable law and school policy.

Other Personal Electronic Devices

Personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, tablets, earbuds/headphones, gaming devices, and similar devices, are also prohibited during the school day.

School-issued devices and technology provided for educational purposes are governed by the school's acceptable-use and technology policies. Students found in possession of a personal tablet or laptop computer will result in the following administrative responses.

1. **First incident**: Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal) member collects the device and holds it in their possession for the duration of the school day and returns it back to the student during dismissal.
2. **Second incident**: Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal) members collect the device and hold it in their possession until a parent or guardian comes to the school and retrieves the device.
3. **Third incident**: Administrator (Principal, Assistant Principal) members collect the device and hold it in their possession until a parent or guardian comes to the school and attends a device management meeting.

Family Communication

Caregivers who need to communicate with a student during the school day should contact the main office. The school will maintain procedures for communicating with students and families in emergency and other appropriate circumstances.

Students may be permitted to access a cell phone or other personal electronic device when directed or authorized by an administrator for an emergency, school-related purpose, or other legitimate circumstance.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent a student from using a personal electronic device when such use is required as part of an individualized accommodation, Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, or other legally required support.

Violations

All students are expected to comply with the school's cell phone and personal electronic device procedures. Failure to properly secure a device, unauthorized possession or use of a device, tampering with a Yondr pouch, or refusing to turn over a device when directed by an authorized staff member may result in disciplinary or other school-based consequences consistent with the Student & Family Handbook and applicable law.

The school will use progressive and developmentally appropriate responses when addressing violations. Consequences may include:

- Temporary confiscation or administrative storage of the device
- Parent/guardian notification
- Loss of privileges
- Detention
- Or other appropriate school-based consequences.

Senior Privilege

Beginning after the conclusion of the first academic quarter, eligible seniors may receive **Senior Privilege**, which is designed to:

1. Recognize and reward positive academic and social behavior; and
2. Provide seniors with an opportunity to practice individual techonology responsibility with appropriate support and guidance from the school.

Senior Privilege is an earned school privilege, not a right. It may be suspended or revoked when a student no longer meets the eligibility requirements or fails to comply with the expectations of the privilege.

Senior Privilege Eligibility

A senior may be eligible for Senior Privilege after the first quarter if the student satisfies **all** of the following requirements:

- Has no more than a total of five (5) tardies, absences, or dismissals during the previous forty-five (45) school days;
- Has no current grade lower than C-; and
- Has maintained a clean disciplinary record during the two most recent academic quarters.
- Has zero phone policy violations in the previous 45 school days.

The school may review eligibility on a regular basis. Meeting the stated criteria does not guarantee that the privilege will be granted if other significant circumstances affect the student's ability to use the privilege responsibly.

Cell Phones and Personal Laptops for Seniors with Senior Privilege

Seniors who have been formally granted Senior Privilege may retain access to their cell phones and personal laptops during the school day, subject to the following requirements:

- The student's cell phone must remain **silent and out of sight** while the student is inside the school building.
- Cell phones may not be used in classrooms, hallways, common areas, or other school spaces unless expressly authorized by a staff member or administrator.
- Students may not use personal laptops, cell phones, or other devices in a manner that disrupts instruction, violates school rules, compromises student privacy, or otherwise conflicts with the expectations of Senior Privilege.

Senior Privilege does not exempt a student from any other school policy, including academic, attendance, disciplinary, technology, or acceptable-use requirements.

Loss or Suspension of Senior Privilege

Senior Privilege may be suspended or revoked when a student fails to meet the eligibility requirements or demonstrates that the privilege is being used irresponsibly.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Exceeding the attendance, tardy, or dismissal threshold;
- Receiving a grade below C-;
- Receiving a disciplinary consequence that makes the student ineligible;
- Receiving a school detention;
- Leaving the building without properly signing out;
- Failing to return from lunch on time;
- Using a cell phone when it is not permitted;
- Using technology in a manner inconsistent with school expectations; or
- Engaging in conduct that demonstrates that the student is not exercising the level of responsibility expected of a student with Senior Privilege.

MHS will communicate the loss or suspension of the privilege to the student and, when appropriate, the student's parent/guardian.

MHS reserves the right to modify, suspend, or revoke Senior Privilege when necessary to maintain a safe, orderly, and productive school environment. The school may also modify implementation procedures as necessary to remain consistent with Massachusetts law, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance, and applicable student accommodations and legal requirements.