

VISTA CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

601 North Fairview Street
Santa Ana, CA 92703
T: (714) 881-7407 | F: (714) 988-2747
www.vistacharterpublicschools.org

Collin Felch, Ed.D., Superintendent
Karen Amaya, Assistant Superintendent



Adopted:
Revised:

Vista Charter Public Schools Mobile Communication Devices Policy

Pursuant to Ed. Code section 48901.7, the Vista Charter Public Schools Governing Board must develop and adopt, and shall update every five years, a policy to limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones while the pupils are at a school site or while the pupils are under the supervision and control of an employee or employees of that school district, county office of education, or charter school.

The Governing Board recognizes that the use of smartphones and other mobile communication devices on campus may be beneficial to student learning and well-being but could also disrupt the instructional program in some circumstances. The Board permits limited use of mobile communication devices on campus in accordance with law and the following policy.

The goal of this policy is to promote evidence-based use of smartphone practices to support pupil learning and well-being. The development of the policy involved significant stakeholder participation to ensure that the policies are responsive to the unique needs and desires of pupils, parents, and educators in each community, including concerns about bullying, social media, safety, and student health.

The Superintendent or designee shall inform staff, students, and parents of this policy, and Vista Charter Public Schools will not be responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to mobile communication devices that are brought to school.

General Provisions:

- Mobile communication devices must be turned off, secured, and stowed away during instructional time or throughout the school day. However, a student may possess or use a mobile communication device under the following circumstances (Education Code 48901.5, 48901.7):
 - In the case of an emergency, or in response to a perceived threat of danger.
 - When a teacher or administrator grants permission to the student to possess or use a mobile communication device, subject to any reasonable limitations imposed by that teacher or administrator.
 - When a licensed physician or surgeon determines that the possession or use is necessary for the student's health and well-being.
 - When the possession or use is required by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

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- Schools may enforce a cell phone pouch protocol, in which students' phones and electronic devices are locked and stowed in a pouch during instructional time, and the teacher or administration may unlock the pouch after school or based on one of the circumstances listed above.
- Mobile communication devices (smartphones, smartwatches, etc.) must not be used in any manner that infringes on the privacy rights of any other person. Concerns regarding the potential misuse of devices for cyberbullying, recording incidents without consent, or accessing inappropriate content are taken seriously, and such behaviors will not be tolerated.
- Research suggests that there is a correlation between students' mental health and well-being in relation to the amount of screen time. Vista Charter Public Schools encourages a healthy balance of activities and limits phone use to avoid distractions that may affect students' physical and emotional health.
- Smartwatches and other smart devices must not interfere with academic activities. Smartwatches may be used for health-related purposes, provided the student submits a doctor's note.
- Earbuds or earphones may only be used if permission is granted by a teacher or administrator to support or enhance academic learning.
- Mobile communication devices are not to be used during class hours, recess, lunch, or other non-emergency times unless approved by a teacher or administrator. Cell phones should remain in backpacks, stored securely, and off during these times. Students may use their phones only in the event of an emergency or with explicit permission from staff.
- In the event of an emergency, students can use their mobile devices to contact parents or emergency services (911), as long as it doesn't pose a safety risk. The school office is available for parents to contact their children during the day in case of emergencies.
- When a school official reasonably suspects that a search of a student's mobile communication device will provide evidence of the student's violation of the law or school rules, such a search shall be conducted in accordance with BP/AR 5145.12 - Search and Seizure.
- Students may use phones outside the classroom for after-school activities and communication with family members, provided they have permission from school staff. Phones should not be used during after-school programs unless authorized by staff.
- A Vista Charter Public Schools staff member may request a student cease the use of mobile communication devices while on district property outside of instructional time,

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including school-sponsored events. The student shall comply with such a request. If the student refuses to comply, the student will be subject to disciplinary action with a notice to parents of the infraction.

Consequences for Misuse:

- If a student uses their phone for inappropriate purposes (e.g., taking unauthorized photos, engaging in cyberbullying, or accessing harmful content), they will face disciplinary action. Students who do not comply with phone storage rules will be required to surrender their phones to school staff, and their parents will be contacted.
- A student may also be subject to discipline, in accordance with law, Board policy, or administrative regulation, for off-campus use of a mobile communication device that poses a threat or danger to the safety of students, staff, or district property or substantially disrupts school activities.

Legal References:

- Ed. Code 48901.5, 48901.7: Limitation or prohibition of student use of cell phones
- BP/AR 5145.12: Search and Seizure