

# POLICY

## PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Telephone Use for Support  
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### 4322 TELEPHONE USE FOR SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS

#### Use of Land Lines

The Board of Education recognizes the need to electronically communicate on a non-school related, personal matter using a personal cellular telephone or other personal communication device during their workday. Electronic communications include, but are not limited to: voice conversations, text-messaging, accessing social networking or other internet sites, or any other type of electronic communication. Telephone and voicemail services are provided to employees to facilitate performance of work.

As with all District resources, the use of telephones and voicemail should be as cost effectively as possible and in keeping with the best interests of the District. All employees must operate within the following basic policy:

- All telephones, telephony equipment, voicemail boxes, and messages contained within voicemail boxes are the property of Paterson Public Schools.
- The Department of Technology is responsible for installation and repair of all District telephony equipment and administration of telephone and voicemail accounts.
- Department/School Administrators are responsible for overseeing telephone and voicemail use, as well as ensuring the Department of Technology is notified of any adds, moves, or changes required to telephone or voicemail services.
- The number of telephone calls made should be limited in number and duration to that necessary for effective District operations.
- All voicemail boxes will be protected with a password. Easy to guess passwords or passwords that begin with a 0 will not be accepted by the system. Passwords must not be shared with others.



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- If a voicemail box is full, no further messages can be recorded. Read voicemail messages will be automatically deleted after 30 days.
- Voicemail is to be used as a backup in the event you are not available to answer a call, and should not be used to screen calls. Each employee is expected to respond to voicemail messages in a timely manner.
- If you will be away from the office for more than one business day, you are expected to change your voicemail greeting to reflect this fact and direct callers to alternate contacts if applicable.
- Use of directory assistance (i.e. 411) should be avoided since a fee is incurred with each use. Employees should utilize the yellow and white page services available on the internet to obtain phone numbers outside of the district's phone directory. District personnel can also make free request for phone numbers by calling 1-800-Free411 to obtain phone numbers at no cost to the district.
- The placing and receiving of telephone calls from school district land lines for reasons other than official school district business should be very infrequent. Frequent use of district land lines for personal use may indicate productivity issues.

An authorization code may be necessary to make certain calls. In order to obtain authorization code, a Long Distance Access Form must be completed. Access can be monitored and is logged by the District. The following is a list of tiered access to the telephone system:

<u>Level of Access</u>	<u>Location</u>
In District Only	Unsecured areas
Local Access (800, 973, 201)	Classrooms (teachers)
NJ Access (all of NJ)	Based on need
National	Based on need
National plus Caribbean	Based on need
International	Based on need



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District telephone and voicemail services may not be used for the following:

- Transmitting obscene, profane, or offensive messages
- Transmitting messages or jokes that violate our harassment policy or create an intimidating or hostile work environment
- Using the telephone system or breaking into a voicemail box via unauthorized use of a password
- Broadcasting unsolicited personal views on social, political, or other non-District related matters
- Soliciting to buy or sell goods or services
- Calling 1-900 phone numbers
- Making personal long distance phone calls without supervisor permission

In general, personal use of telephone and voicemail services is allowable, but must be limited in number and duration and must not interfere with performance of District operations.

The District reserves the right to monitor telephone and voicemail use, including telephone conversations and the contents of voicemail boxes. Monitoring of telephone and voicemail use will only be done for legitimate reasons, such as to retrieve lost messages, recover from system failure, or comply with investigations of wrongful acts.

Changes in telephone coding, passwords, and special privileges assigned to district personnel shall be reviewed annually and any necessary changes will be made for process improvements.

Requests for changes in telephone access must be made through the submittal of a Technology Work Order Request or on a Request for Long Distance Access form.



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Complete copies of all telephone bills shall be received by the district in order to have them reviewed. Bills that are received electronically shall be sorted, formatted, and then sent to department heads or school principals. Departments will be sent a monthly itemization for all long distance and local telephone calls placed from a land line. Designated department heads shall report any misuse that shows up on their phone bill. The district encourages the use of e-mail services as a way to decrease the costs associated with in-state and state-to-state calls.

### PROCEDURES FOR REIMBURSEMENT

All personal calls made that incur charges are subject to reimbursement. Unauthorized charges on the telephone bill that are verified should be paid directly to the Office of Business Services. A 5% penalty will be applied for past due balances over 30 days.

#### Penalty Procedure

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee reserves the right to discipline employees for violations of this policy up to and including termination.

#### Personal Cellular Telephone Use

The Paterson Board of Education recognizes a school support staff member may have the need to make a personal telephone call during their workday when the telephone call cannot be made before the staff member reports to work and/or after the staff member's workday has concluded.

#### Definition

"Electronic Portable Communication Devices" are defined to include portable two-way telecommunication devices, including but not limited to cellular telephones, walkie-talkies, personal



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digital assistants (PDAs), and other hand-held computing devices (when such device is being used as a communication device).

"Other electronic devices" shall include but not be limited to beepers, pagers, iPods, MP3 players, Walkmans, BlackBerries, Bluetooth and other similar electronic devices.

"Use" shall mean making or receiving phone calls, taking or receiving photographs, text-messaging, playing games, listening to music and using any other function or feature of the cellular phone or other electronic device.

"Vibrate" shall mean that the cellular telephone or other electronic portable communication device is in silent or vibrate mode.

"Emergency" shall mean an unexpected and sudden event that must be dealt with urgently or a situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or environment.

In the event the staff member needs to electronically communicate on a non-school related, personal matter using a personal cellular telephone or other personal communication device during their workday, and the telephone call is of such a nature that it cannot be made before the staff member's workday begins or after the workday has concluded, the school staff member may receive or make a personal telephone call using their personal cellular telephone or other electronic portable communication device during the workday provided the telephone call is an emergency or made during the staff member's free lunch/break periods and is made outside the presence of pupils or away from the staff member's workstation, either in an area inside or outside the school building or district office designated by the staff member's Building Principal or immediate supervisor.

A personal telephone call by a support staff member on their personal cellular telephone or other electronic portable



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communication device shall not be made while the support staff member is performing assigned school district responsibilities. The cellular telephone or other electronic portable device must be placed on vibrate and must not be visible and ear devices should not be worn during the work day.

In the event the staff member has an emergency requiring immediate attention that requires the personal use of their personal cellular telephone or other electronic portable communication device, the support staff member may use his/her personal cellular telephone to eliminate the emergency. If an employee is seen using his/her cellular phone by an Administrator, said Administrator shall have the right to review the employee's incoming/outgoing phone log and or text messages in order to confirm/determine that the phone was in use as a result of an emergency. The employee's refusal to turn over the phone for verification purposes or if the Administrator's verification process determines that the call was not to the level a reasonable person would consider an emergency, the infraction shall be met with disciplinary action. The Building Principal or immediate supervisor is responsible for educating staff about appropriate cellular telephone or other electronic portable communication device procedures and monitoring their usage. Failure to adhere to policy may result in disciplinary action.

## District Issued Cellular Telephone

The purpose of this policy is to establish Paterson Public School District protocol regarding the procurement, distribution and usage of District Cellular phones; to ensure that the use of cell phones for District business is authorized and monitored; and to ensure that the District is reimbursed for personal use of District Cell phones.

The District may provide staff with a cell phone when deemed necessary to conduct district business. Staff to whom this might apply may include but not be limited to, employees who are



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required to be accessible at all times, mobile employees, employees who respond to emergencies, are responsible for restoring services and those that are vital to decision-making for the District.

All cell phone and service requests (new and upgrade) are to be made to the Director of Technology.

A current inventory of all cellular telephones must be maintained and shall include telephone numbers, along with the name of each employee to whom a unit has been assigned.

Employees are responsible for the safekeeping and care of their District issued cell phone and shall not "loan" or otherwise make available their cell phone to non-district personnel.

Cellular telephone service provided to an employee is for District business. This item and (other items listed in IRC § 280F) are considered "listed property". Because the nature of the property lends itself to personal use, strict substantiation requirements are in place. Any personal use shall be of a diminutive nature.

Employees are required to account for business and personal use. Records of business and personal use must be kept by the employee in order to determine whether the value of any of the use is included in the employee's wages. All personal calls made that incur charges are subject to reimbursement.

The Department of Technology will continue to review District Cellular phone bills in an effort to reduce unreasonable charges, and personal and non-district cell phone usage. District Cell phone users will be held responsible and liable for all charges incurred as a result of personal usage.

All downloads are prohibited and are therefore blocked on District issued cell phones, including music, games and travel



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directions. To avert directory assistance charges, District cell phone users should utilize free information services available online, such as yellow and white pages directories. District cell phone users should also call 1-800-free411 to obtain telephone directory assistance, which will not incur charges. To further keep charges at a minimum, District cell phone use is discouraged when a desktop phone is available.

District cell phone privileges may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct. Such conduct shall include, but not be limited to using the District cell phone to harass and/or annoy, to use a service that requires a fee (such as 900 numbers), for defamatory or obscene purposes, or for any illegal activities.

District employees are obligated to use District cell phones in a responsible and safe manner and to observe all applicable laws and regulations.

Employees assigned District cell phones must surrender the cell phone upon termination of employment (i.e., retirement or voluntary/involuntary termination) or upon reassignment to another school/department. At this point, no further use of the cell phone is authorized. If, upon termination of employment, the employee returns the cell phone to their immediate supervisor, the Department of Technology must be notified prior to reassignment of the cell phone to another staff member. Each staff member must sign a receipt from the Department of Technology stating that they have received the equipment.

A lost, stolen or damaged District Cellular telephone must be reported immediately by the employee to the Department of Security and the Department of Technology in order for an Incident Report to be completed and an investigation to begin. Service for said lost, stolen, or damaged District Cellular telephone will also be suspended upon notification, so as not to incur unauthorized charges. The employee will also file a Report of Lost, Stolen or Damaged Property form with the Department of





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Security. In the case of the equipment which is determined to be actually lost or stolen, the equipment is deleted from inventory after the Department of Security provides the Report of Lost, Stolen or Damaged Property to the Business Department. The School Business Administrator shall ensure a professional estimate of the cost of repairs and/or replacement, and determine if suspension or revocation of privileges are to be imposed.

This Policy shall be provided to staff members upon adoption and distributed to each staff member at the beginning of his or her employment.

Adopted: 20 August 2008  
Revised: 18 January 2012  
Revised: 17 October 2012  
Revised: 19 March 2014  
Revised: 18 November 2015

