CELL PHONE USAGE

The Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) maintains an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), as per Administrative Regulation 4040, which discusses the use of cell phones in the workplace and during work hours. As stated in the VCOE AUP:

“This Acceptable Use Policy provides direction regarding the appropriate and inappropriate use of technology, personal or otherwise:

• During the performance of duties;
• While at a VCOE location; and/or
• While using VCOE equipment and/or accessing VCOE resources.

“VCOE recognizes [...] that some personal use is inevitable and that incidental and occasional personal use that is infrequent or brief in duration is permitted so long as it occurs on personal time, does not interfere with VCOE business, and is not otherwise prohibited by VCOE policy, procedure, or statute.”

In the Presence of Students

For employees assigned to classrooms, use of cell phones, smart phones, tablets and similar mobile communication devices for calls, texts, emails, social media, internet use, etc. is prohibited during instructional time, in the presence of students, or during scheduled work hours, with the exception of emergencies.

Examples of prohibited employee use of communication devices during the work day include:

• Checking, reading, composing, and/or sending personal texts, instant messages and/or emails in the classroom or in the presence of students;
• Using a cell phone to check voicemails in the classroom or in the presence of students;
• Using a cell phone for personal calls in the classroom or in the presence of students;
• Accessing social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) in the classroom or in the presence of students.

Emergency Situations

The VCOE AUP, as quoted above, recognizes the occasional need for personal cell phone use in emergency situations. Although cell phones may be used to place and/or take calls in these situations, staff members must inform their teacher/supervisor of the need to step outside of the instructional setting to either place and/or take such a call. Additionally, even where calls made or received are reasonably characterized as “emergencies,” such calls should not be excessive and should not interfere with VCOE’s normal business practices and the performance of the individual's tasks.

Violation of Administrative Regulation 4040, as explained above, may result in discipline in accordance with VCOE Handbooks, collective bargaining agreements (if applicable), Board Policies, and state and federal law.