Policy: **Cell Phones - Authorization, Payment and Reimbursement**

Employees having significant mobile communications needs may be authorized by their supervisor, subject to approval by the appropriate account manager and Executive Director, Sr. Executive Director, Chief, Assistant Superintendent, Community Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, or Superintendent, to receive a monthly stipend for the purpose of obtaining a mobile phone/data service plan. Employees receiving a stipend shall be required to have a mobile phone and service plan (including talk, text, and data), and have the phone available for work related communications in accordance with job requirements. Use of BCPS email on a personal device shall be strictly limited to BCPS business, and the terms and conditions of appropriate and safe use of electronic mail, as set forth in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent’s Rule 4104, Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP) and the Technology Acceptable Use Agreement for Employees and Non-Employees form (Rule 4104, Form A).

Responsibility: Department Heads and Account Manager responsible for the applicable budget.

Procedures:

I. **Personnel Required to Have Cell Phones**

   Department Heads shall decide which employees have *significant* mobile communications needs related to the responsibilities of their position. These individuals may be provided one of the following options:

   a. A monthly taxable phone and/or data stipend.

   b. Department heads may assign BCPS-owned cell phones to BCPS-owned vehicles (not individuals) such as buses, maintenance vehicles, grounds vehicles, etc., depending on the needs of the department and to ensure safety and effective communications. These phones are not to be used by employees for personal business.
II. Stipend Authorization
   a. The responsible manager shall prepare a *Cell Phone Stipend Authorization Form*, obtain approval from the appropriate Executive Director, Sr. Executive Director, Chief, or Assistant/Community/Deputy Superintendent, and forward the completed authorization form to the Controller’s Office.
   b. The Controller’s Office will verify that the stipends are charged to the appropriate budget account.
   c. Employees receiving stipends are responsible for paying for and maintaining service and having their mobile phone available for school system business.
   d. Employees may not be reimbursed for the purchase or lease of a phone.

III. Annual Update
    The responsible department head shall annually review whether their staff continues to have significant mobile communication needs that require the use of mobile phones to conduct BCPS business and fulfill the responsibilities of their positions.

IV. Transfer or Change in Status
    Any termination, transfer between offices or departments, or change in funding source of staff receiving a cell phone stipend shall be reported to the Controller’s Office using the *Cell Phone Stipend Authorization* form.
    The stipend will be suspended for employees who are on leave from work for medical or other personal reasons for more than one month. Employees are required to notify the Payroll Office in such instances.

V. Use of Personal Cell Phones for Business by Employees That Do Not Receive Stipends
   a. Staff that do not have significant mobile communications needs, and therefore do not receive a cell phone stipend, may occasionally have a need to use their personal cell phone for school system business.
   
   b. BCPS will reimburse employees for the cost of BCPS business phone calls made on their personal cell phones, *only* when that cost increases the employee’s out-of-pocket expenditure over their normal monthly base charge.
   
   c. The reimbursement rate will be at the same rate assessed by the cell phone provider for the work-related calls made after exceeding the base monthly plan. The reimbursement amount, when added to the normal monthly charge, may not exceed the total cell phone bill for the month (excluding taxes and other fees).
   
   d. The reimbursement should be claimed on a standard Cell Phone Reimbursement Form, approved by the account manager, and submitted with a copy of the phone bill(s) attached. The business calls should be highlighted on the attached itemized bill(s). The amount of the reimbursement shall not exceed the overage cost incurred by the employee.
VI. Emergency Phones for Vehicles Only

Certain offices and Student Transportation vehicles may find it necessary to maintain a cell phone(s) with BCPS vehicles for possible emergency situations. The phones may be obtained through BCPS approved vendors in accordance with established contracts. These phones may be obtained by contacting the designated representative for the cell phone companies that BCPS has contracts with. The contact information is available from the Office of Purchasing. Emergency phones shall not be assigned to individuals. The BCPS Technology Acceptable Use Policy (TAUP) applies to these phones.

VII. Stipend Rates

Employees authorized to receive a stipend will receive it generally on the first paycheck of each month. The stipend will begin the month following receipt of the properly executed Cell Phone Stipend Authorization Form. The approved form must be received in the Controller’s Office by the 15th of the preceding month in order to begin the following month. Stipend rate(s) are as follows:

- Phone plan stipend $53 per month and/or
- Data plan stipend $56 per month

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