



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Parent/Guardian:

In an era of cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential and secure test materials can be easily compromised. Not only is it expensive to replace a compromised test item, the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyrighted property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation. 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*

In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the Department of Education requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. One step or rule required in all schools is that electronic devices are not permitted at test sites. Electronic devices include cell phones, smartphones, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Please speak with your child and let him or her know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in certain consequences.

If a student is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams, you will be contacted by the school. Students that ignore this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. In addition, the electronic device will be held by school staff and the device's stored photographs will be searched. School staff will also ask for permission to search other functions of the electronic device. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff and, because the Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted.

If, after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other electronic device in his or her possession during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's scores will be invalidated.