

Primary student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy at St Agnes School

Purpose

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets or laptops that are not part of a separate Bring Your Own Device arrangement. This policy applies while students are at school, or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours.

The safe use of technology is a priority whenever students are engaged in learning experiences. As such, St Agnes School have extended this policy to also include overnight excursions/camps.

This is to ensure that learning is optimised as some features, such as access to the Internet can be inappropriate when not properly monitored, in addition to being disruptive to student learning and wellbeing, particularly when on overnight excursions/camps. The major issues relating to the use of electronic devices during such events include:

- disruption to educational programs through the receipt and transmission of messages
- privacy concerns related to the ability of many devices to take photographs or record conversations without the knowledge of those being recorded
- access and interface with inappropriate materials via the Internet
- potential for cyber bullying including the sender's view that they have anonymity
- loss and/or theft

With these potential issues in mind, St Agnes School has a strict no mobile phones or personal devices expectation when students attend extended excursions.

Personal devices for the purpose of this policy includes mobile phones, iPads, android tablets, iPods, laptop computers, smartwatches* and any device that performs the various functions commonly found within those listed.

**Smart Watches are watches that have the multiple functions which may include telling time, weather, step counting but also have a camera, internet and phone functions. Such devices include but are not limited to, Spacetalk, Mochies and Apple Watches.*

Mobile phone use for primary school students

The department's position is that primary aged students cannot use their mobile phones and personal devices at school during school hours. The department and the school recognise that there are legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school.

This may include:

- to ensure their safety while travelling
- so that parents can contact them outside of school hours.

During the school day students are not permitted to access or use their mobile phones or other personal devices. Students must switch off or mute their devices before storing them at the beginning of the school day. They will not be able to access their device until the end of the school day.

Storage of personal devices

Mobile Devices, excluding smart watches at school

Students are required to keep mobile devices in their school bag prior to and after school, while on school grounds.

At the start of each school day they are required to place mobile devices into a container (provided to each class teacher).

Teachers are required to lock the container into a lockable cupboard in their class. In the event of a relief teacher taking the class and not having access to the lockable storage, then the tub is to be placed into the lockable cupboard of the class next door.

At the end of the day the teacher will supervise students retrieving their device from the container, ensuring it occurs in an orderly manner.

Smart Watches

Students are permitted to wear the device during the school day or on an overnight excursion/camp, provided the following functions are disabled and not used while on school grounds, in line with this policy:

- Phone
- Internet access
- Camera

If the student does not comply

As per the school's behaviour management policy, consequences for not complying with this policy will result in one or more of the following to occur:

- Restorative conversations/action
- Communication with parents
- Senior staff involvement

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

- Make sure:
 - this policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families
 - there is a process for regular review of the policy
 - secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff and they are appropriately secure
 - processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.
- Enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.
- Consider requests for exemptions from the policy from parents on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.

School staff

- Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment. Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment at times when a device is being used by a student in line with an approved exemption or in circumstances where students' devices are stored in the classroom.
- Respond to instances of non-compliance in line with the school's policy.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.
- Make sure that any student personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent).
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.

Students

- Comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff
- If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with an exemption under this policy, do so in a safe, responsible and respectful way and support peers to do the same
- Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person
- Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission
- Exemption is in place (parent has signed form) if device is required (i.e for medical reasons)
- Smart Watch Agreement is in place if a smart watch is to be worn to school or on an overnight excursion/camp

Parents

- Support the implementation of the school's policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy
- Use the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school). Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience an issue at school
- Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone (or other personal device) in a safe, responsible and respectful way
- Exemption is in place (parent has signed form) if device is required (i.e for medical reasons)
- Smart Watch Agreement is in place if a smart watch is to be worn to school or on an overnight excursion/camp

Communication and review

Consultation has been undertaken with students, staff and the broader school community to make local decisions regarding the storage of students' devices and what actions will be taken if students do not comply with the policy.

Policy ratified by Governing Council on: 16th June 2021

Next Policy Review Date: Term 2, 2024

Supporting information

- [Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- [Cyber Safety Policy](#)