

Student use of mobile devices policy

Important to note

- For the purpose of this document, *mobile phones and wearable devices* include mobile phones, smartwatches, handheld devices and other emerging technologies which have the ability to connect to telecommunication networks or the internet.
- This document does not apply to personal or school-owned devices, such as iPads, tablets or laptops, that are approved for educational use as part of the school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

Overview

Queensland state schools are committed to reducing the distraction of mobile phones and wearable devices to provide optimal learning environments for all students.

'Away for the day' aims to:

- provide optimal learning and teaching environments, free from the distractions caused by personal use of mobile phones and wearable devices
- support schools to create safe and supportive learning environments that prioritise student engagement and wellbeing
- encourage increased face-to-face social interactions between students
- promote the health and wellbeing of students by providing opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during break times, and
- reduce the potential for students to be exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world, resulting from unsafe or inappropriate use of technology, such as cyberbullying, accessing harmful content or breaches of personal privacy.

Student use of mobile phones and wearable devices at school

From Term 1 2024, all state school students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours. Notifications on wearable devices, such as smartwatches, must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

This document also applies to student attendance at school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps, unless otherwise determined by the school principal.

Students may only use their mobile phone or have wearable device notifications enabled during these times if they are participating in a teacher-led educational activity that complies with the school's local implementation approach, or have an approved exemption for medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons.

Students participating activities, such as off-site Vocational Education and Training or work placements must follow the expectations of the organisation in charge regarding the use of mobile devices.

Bringing mobile phones and wearable devices to school

The *Student Code of Conduct* details staff responsibilities to support students to understand and meet behavioural expectations of the school, and guidance on the application, where required, of disciplinary consequences.

Students are discouraged from bringing mobile devices to school. If a student brings a personal device to school, the school does not take any responsibility for the loss or damage of this item.

School expectations:

- **Students must not access or use their mobile phone or wearable device for the duration of the school day from 8:50am to 2:55pm.**
- **Smart watches may be worn but must be disabled / disconnected from other devices during school hours.**
- **Mobile phones are to be stored in student storage lockers during the day – ie. not in pockets, bags, pencil cases etc**
- **Students who are seen by any staff member accessing their mobile device will be asked to turn off their device and take it to the storage lockers.**
- **Students will not be permitted to use their device to pay for items during the school day. They will be required to use cash or a physical debit card.**
- **Only students with an approved exemption will be permitted to use their device for a specific time / purpose.**
- **Smart watches and phones may only be permitted to be brought on camps and excursions under the direction of the Principal, however may only be used at set times as indicated by school staff.**
- **Any student not meeting these expectations may receive consequences.**

In determining student consequences, school staff will take into consideration the individual circumstances of each student. This means making decisions that are reasonable for the situation. Possible consequences for failing to meet the stated expectations include:

1st and 2nd instances:

- providing a verbal reminder to the student or class about expected behaviour
- directing the student to place the mobile phone in storage
- directing the student to switch off notifications on their wearable device
- applying a detention for a defined period of time.

Subsequent instances:

- removing the device temporarily and returning to the student or requesting their parent collect the device at the conclusion of the school day
- applying a detention for a defined period of time.

Failure to comply:

- if a student argues about taking to the phone to the office or refuses to hand it in, further consequences will be applied as per Student Code of Conduct.

Mobile phones and wearable devices that have been temporarily removed from the student must be stored and retained in accordance with the department's [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#).

Schools are encouraged to consider preventative measures such as the development of a whole-school approach that promotes the safe, respectful and positive use of mobile phones and other technology through delivery of the Australian Curriculum and specific programs focused on digital literacy.

When managing inappropriate online behaviours or reputation management incidents, the primary concern must be the safety and wellbeing of the students and/or staff members involved. Further guidance on responding to online incidents can be found in the [Online incident management guidelines for school leaders](#) and [How to manage online incidents that impact your school](#) flowchart.

Storage of mobile phones

Sarina State High School students who bring their mobile phone to school, will be expected to place their phone into a **school provided combination locker before the start of the school day**. The device is to remain in the locker until the end of the school day or until the student has permission to take it out.

Exemptions

Students with an approved exemption must only use their mobile phone or wearable device for the intended, approved purpose. These students will be provided with a card that indicates they have an exemption to use their device in specific circumstances.

Individual circumstances

Consideration of individual circumstances must be given to students who require temporary or ongoing exemptions to the school's local implementation approach, including where:

- the mobile phone or wearable device is used by the student to monitor or manage a medical condition (in accordance with the [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#))
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed reasonable adjustment for a student with disability or learning difficulties
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used by the student as an augmentative or alternative communication system or as an aide to access and participate in the environment, e.g. navigation or object/people identification applications
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed adjustment for a student with English as an additional language or dialect
- the student has extenuating circumstances that necessitates the need for access to their mobile phone or wearable device during the school day, including (but not limited to) students who contribute financially to their household, independent students, and students who are primary carers for a child or family member, or
- students in Years 11 and 12 are applying for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) for assistive technology.

Principals (or their delegates) will consider requests for exemption received from students or parents on a case-by-case basis. When considering an exemption request, principals (or their delegates) may seek additional information to support the need for the student to access their mobile phone or wearable device during the school day.

Approved exemptions, including details of how and when a student may access their mobile phone or wearable device, should be documented in the student's OneSchool Support Provisions tab and communicated to school staff, including temporary relief staff.

In making a decision not to approve an exemption, principals (or their delegates) will undertake an assessment of the human rights that may be impacted by the decision and consider whether the limit placed on those human rights is reasonable and justified. The assessment should be documented appropriately.

Where an exemption is not approved and the student or their parent expresses dissatisfaction with the decision, information about how to make a customer complaint and how a complaint will be managed should be made available in accordance with the [Customer complaints management procedure](#).

School specific exemptions

It is acknowledged that the use of mobile phones and wearable devices can support the school's teaching and learning programs by providing valuable learning experiences for students, as well as supporting day-to-day school operations.

Teachers, in line with their Head of Department, may give permission for students to use their mobile phone or wearable device in the classroom, for a specific and agreed educational purpose

Students may be permitted to access and use their mobile phones and wearable devices during school representative sports, camps or excursions at specified and supervised times (in accordance with the [School excursions procedure](#)).

Use of mobile phones and other electronic devices during these activities will be outlined in the information and permission documentation issued prior to the excursion / camp / activity.

Where principals make a decision to permit the use of mobile phones and wearable devices under these specific circumstances, consideration should be given to:

- whether the same outcome can be achieved using student or school-owned devices approved for educational use as part of the school's BYOD policy
- whether the student's mobile phone is able to be connected to the school's network, to support safe and filtered access to the internet (in accordance with the [Use of ICT systems procedure](#)), and
- ensuring students only use their mobile phone or wearable device for the intended, agreed purpose.

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act Qld \(2019\)](#)

Other resources

- [Customer complaints management procedure](#)
- [Cybersafety and reputation management](#)
- [Inclusive education policy](#)
- [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#)
- [Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure](#)
- [Student discipline procedure](#)
- [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#)
- [Use of ICT systems procedure](#)
- [Use of mobile devices procedure](#)