

Primary student use of mobile phones and personal devices

Dear Parents/ Caregivers,

Students at Cowandilla Primary School have access to high quality computing facilities provided to support their learning. This includes access to iPads owned by the school. We do not currently support the use of students' personally owned devices during school hours. However, we recognise that some parents wish their child to have access to a mobile device for use before and after 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, mobile phones, smartwatches, tablets or laptops. This policy applies while students are at school or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours.

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 Cowandilla Primary 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 and sign in their devices at the Resource Centre 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

Devices handed in to the school will be locked away in the Resource Centre during the day and treated with due care.

Consequences for non-compliance

The school will use the existing behaviour management processes to respond to intentional and persistent breaches of the policy.

Roles and responsibilities

Students

Keeping our students safe in the online world is a priority for us.

In order to achieve this, students are expected to:

- switch off and sign in their devices at the Resource Centre at the beginning of the school day,
- collect and sign out their devices at the end of each day,
- follow our school values of Respect and Responsibility when using both school, and personal devices,
- comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the principal and school staff,
- communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person, and
- respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.

The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage to mobile devices or other personal property while in the care of students.

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. Parents should be aware that, as well as advantages, there are risks associated with children having access to personal internet connected devices. The main risks to consider are:

- **Access to unfiltered internet content.** Our school currently uses internet filtering for school owned devices to prevent access to sites containing inappropriate content (such as pornography & gambling). While no internet filtering solution is perfect, this provides us with a high level of protection. We are unable to filter or monitor internet access on student owned personal devices. Even without a mobile phone plan which includes data, students using personal devices may be able to access public "hot spots" to connect to the internet while on site.
- **Increased risks of cyberbullying.** The school has programs in place which teach students about responsible online behaviour (this includes the use of mobile devices). Cyberbullying (including using text messages to bully, and taking or publishing inappropriate photos) can increase with access to personal devices. It is important to discuss with your children your expectations of appropriate use and what to do if they experience cyberbullying.
- **Distraction from learning.** Mobile devices can be great learning tools. However, students with personal devices at school may be distracted from their learning by phone calls, text messages, internet use, or games. School owned devices have apps provided by the school to support student learning. Personal devices may have apps considered inappropriate for school use and may cause a distraction to others.
- **Security of personal devices while on school grounds.** The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of digital devices and other personal property that is in the care of students.
- **Expense to parents.** As well as the initial cost of devices, there may be ongoing phone and data charges. It is important to assess which plans are appropriate for your child to use.

School staff

Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

School staff will:

- 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), and
- 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.

Principal

The principal will:

- 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
- 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,
- report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements, and
- enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance,

They will 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 the Resource Centre, and
- processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.

Communication and review

This policy is available on the school website, at the Front Office and the Resource Centre.

This policy was reviewed by the Cowandilla Primary School Governing Council June 2021.

For further information, please email the Front Office at dl.0106.info@schools.sa.edu.au

Supporting information

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Cowandilla Behaviour Code
- Student Information on Bully, Harassment and Violence document