

Procedures for Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services

June 2022

Rationale

This procedure guides student use of digital devices and online services at our school. Digital devices and online services support and enhance educational outcomes and student wellbeing but may cause harm if used inappropriately. The school recognises the need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework outlining shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents and carers to:

- ensure the safe, responsible and respectful use of school-provided and personal digital devices and online services by students in school-related settings, including:
 - on school grounds during class, at recess and at lunch,
 - at school-related activities, and
 - outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students; and,
- manage the potential risks to student safety and wellbeing.

1. Mobile Phones

1.1 Acceptable student use of mobile phones

Student must take full responsibility for phones whilst in their possession. Students who bring phones to school do so at their own risk.

Students must hand in their phones at the office on their arrival at school. The phone is to be brought straight to the office. They will sign the mobile phone register and the phone will be secured. Phones must be collected at the end of the day no later than 3.10pm. Students will sign at the end of the day to say they have collected their phone.

The school and its staff are not responsible for any loss, theft or damage. Whilst due care will be taken with students' phones while it is secured in the office, the school cannot accept responsibility for damage, theft or loss of the phone.

Should a student need to make a call during the school day, they must:

- approach the administration office and ask for permission to use the school's phone; or,
- discuss the matter with a member of the leadership team.

During school hours, parents and carers are expected to only contact their children via the school office. The office remains the first point of contact for cases of emergency. If a parent or caregiver needs to contact a student at school as a result of an emergency, they are required to call the school's main office and a message will be sent immediately to the student. If a student needs to make emergency contact with anyone they can do so through the school's main office.

1.2 Inappropriate student use of mobile phones

Inappropriate use of a mobile phone includes:

- use that disrupts or is likely to disrupt learning or interfere with the operation of the school;
- bullying, intimidating or otherwise harassing others through SMS or text messaging or through photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone;
- recording of conversations, including lessons, without the knowledge and permission of the teacher or those involved in the conversation;
- downloading or otherwise accessing inappropriate material on the internet such as child abuse or pornographic or other offensive material;
- filming fights or other criminal behaviour involving students that occur at school, during school activities or while on the way to or from school;
- use that threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of any person; and,
- use that is in breach of any law.

1.3 Consequences for inappropriate student use of mobile phones

If students use mobile phones inappropriately, principals have the right to act. Depending on the circumstances, action can include:

- confiscating mobile phones from individual students;
- applying student disciplinary provisions; and,
- reporting the matter to the police.

It is appropriate to confiscate phones from students when:

- it is necessary to examine the phone because there are reasonable grounds to suspect inappropriate material may be on the phone;
- material that falls within the meaning of sexting is found on the phone;
- the phone has been used to record fights or other criminal activity involving students occurring at a school, during school activities or on the way to or from the school.

If video recordings of fights or other criminal or potential criminal activity are located on a student's phone, principals need to consider whether the nature of the material recorded warrants reporting to the police in addition to any potential action under the school student discipline policy.

2. Digital Devices Other Than Phones

School-owned digital devices are provided for student use. These devices include (but are not limited to) laptops, iPads and desktop computers. Students may also be permitted to bring non-phone devices to school under certain circumstances.

Use of these devices is restricted to educational purposes approved by a teacher or principal.

Exemptions may apply in some circumstances, including:

- use of digital devices and online services for medical reasons;
- use of devices and online services that constitute a reasonable adjustment as part of a student's Personalised Learning Plan.

Parents and carers can request an exemption, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion.

The sections of this document outlining inappropriate student use of mobile phones (1.2) and the consequences for such use (1.3) apply to non-phone devices.

3. Access to online services

All student access to online services must occur by a student logging into the Department of Education Wi-Fi network (detnsw), which available across the entirety of the Punchbowl Public School campus. This ensures that students have the firewall protection provided by the Department of Education, including the filtering and restriction of content available.

Whilst on school grounds or at school-related activities, students are not permitted to use internet connection capability within student-owned phones or devices (e.g., SIM card) to connect directly to online services and thereby bypass the *detnsw* network.

4. Responsibilities and Obligations

4.1 Student Responsibilities

- Be safe, responsible and respectful users of digital devices and online services and support their peers to be the same.
- Respect and follow school values, rules and procedures and the decisions made by staff, knowing that other schools may have different arrangements.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the [Behaviour Code for Students](#).

4.2 Parent and Carer Responsibilities

- Recognise their role in educating their children and modelling behaviours that underpin safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Support implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home such as use of online services with age and content restrictions.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively.
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom.

4.3 Principal and Teacher Responsibilities

- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Establishing agreed classroom expectations for using digital devices and online services, in line with this procedure and departmental policy.
- Identifying strategies to ensure that all students can engage in classroom activities including strategies to accommodate students without a digital device.
- Reading and abiding by the Terms of Service for any online services they use in teaching, including those limiting use by age.
- Educating students about online privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy and other online safety related issues.
- Modelling appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy.
- Responding to and reporting any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes:
 - reporting the creation, possession or distribution of indecent or offensive material to the Incident Support and Report hotline as required by the Incident Notification and Response Policy and Procedures and consider any mandatory reporting requirements;
 - working with the department and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (if necessary) to resolve cases of serious online bullying and image-based abuse; and,
 - following the school's behaviour management plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services.
- Support parents and carers to understand strategies that promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services wherever possible and particularly as issues emerge.
- Participate in professional development related to appropriate use of digital devices and online services.

4.4 Non-Teaching Staff, Volunteer and Contractor Responsibilities

- Be aware of and act in line with the department's policy and this procedure.
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with.

5. Policy Links

- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2020-0471?refid=28585>
- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/legal-issues-bulletins/bulletin-35-misuse-of-technology-in-schools>
- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2020-0471?refid=285859>

Document history and details

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7 June 2022

Approving Officer

Donna McGeary – Principal, Punchbowl Public School

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