



Procedures for the restriction of mobile phones and electronic devices in school

Implementation: January 2022

Background

Following a 2018 independent review into the non-educational use of mobile phones, the NSW Education Minister determined that mobile phones and associated portable electronic devices would be banned from all NSW public primary schools. It was also determined that secondary schools have the option to place restrictions on student use of these devices, following consultation with all stakeholders. These restrictions apply to all digital devices, including phones, tablets, computers and other portable digital and smart devices. It covers use on school grounds, school-related activities, and anywhere with a close connection between school and the conduct of students. The intended aims of these procedures are to ensure that digital devices **enhance** rather than **interrupt** learning while also protecting students from harm through inappropriate use.

Coffs Harbour High School staff, parents and students were consulted via P&C and SRC, staff meetings and special presentations to staff and parents. All staff and parents were surveyed regarding the development of these procedures. Survey results indicated significant support for restricting mobile phone use in school while allowing students to bring phones for use before and after school. To accommodate this, the school partnered with Yondr to supply students with a magnetic lockable phone pouch to contain their phone while they are at school. The following procedures were communicated to all staff, students and parents via assemblies, meetings, newsletters, and emails.

Procedures

Restrictions

- Restrictions apply to all personal electronic devices except for laptop computers used for learning. This includes restrictions on the use of airpods/headphones.
- Restricted devices are not to be used on school grounds during school hours. This includes classrooms and the playground.
- Devices are not used on day-to-day local offsite activities such as PDHPE lessons or field trips to the Jetty area.
- Devices are allowed on overnight excursions.
- Devices are allowed on day excursions at the discretion of the teacher.



Implementation

- Each student is issued their Yondr phone pouch at no cost. Students pay for any replacement pouch if they damage or lose their pouch.
- Unlocking stations will be installed at all school entrances/exits.
- Students will be required to turn off their phone, unlock their pouch and lock the phone in the pouch until they leave at the end of the school day. Students are not permitted to use their phones during the school day (from arrival at school up to 3:10 pm or when they leave school, if earlier).
- Students are not permitted to use airpods/earphones, smartwatches, or other devices paired to their phones.
- If a student has their phone out at school, they will be required to lock their phone in their phone pouch immediately. If the student does not have their phone pouch, then their phone will be placed in a temporary phone pouch and kept in the front office for the remainder of the day.

Exceptions and Exemptions

- Students with a documented medical, disability or learning need that require appropriate access to their phone during the school day will be able to apply for an exemption through a parent letter to the front office with appropriate supporting documentation. These applications will be considered by the school Learning and Support Team, with the final decision made by the Principal. Phone use in these exceptional circumstances will then be written into the student's Health Care Plan or Personalised Learning and Support Plan.
- If there is a curriculum use for a phone, teachers can access a portable unlocking station just for their lesson.
- Regardless of the exemption, if a student misuses their phone, they will receive a punishment.

Enforcement

A "three strikes process" carries throughout the year and is reset at the start of the following year:

1. For the first instance of phone use - the student receives a warning, and the teacher will make an entry in Sentral student administration software.
2. For the second or further instance of phone use - the student will receive a formal caution and contact home to a parent. The formal caution will warn the student that repeated phone use may result in suspension.
3. For the third instance of phone use - the student will be referred to the Deputy Principal, who will consider recommending to the Principal that the student be suspended from school.