

Parents and Carers

'Away for the day' – Electronic Devices

Frequently asked questions

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 includes student break times and sporting events.

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 laptops, that are approved for educational use as part of the school's laptop agreement policy.

Why are students required to put their electronic devices away for the day?

'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.

Can my child bring a phone or electronic device to school?

Yes - Students are permitted to bring mobile phones and wearable devices to school to:

- support safe travel to and from school
- make contact with parents, friends and part-time employers **outside of the school day**, and
- Wearable devices such as smart watches can be worn, however notifications must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

How will my child store their electronic device/s while at school?

Student will be able to store their phone and other electronic devices by one of the following ways:

- on their person (e.g. in student's pocket or pencil case)
- in the student's school bag
- in student lockers, and
- in a secure location, such as a locked cupboard in the school office.

Will students be able to wear smart watches or fitness trackers?

Yes - Students are permitted to bring these devices to school to however:

- the device must be disconnected and placed on silent
- the devices will not be allowed in exam situations

Are there exemptions to the rule?

Yes - Where a technology device is required for a special learning project, the classroom teacher must seek approval from the relevant HOD and Executive team member. This provision may be for any of the following exemptions:

- teachers, in line with the school's policy, may give permission for students to use their mobile phone or wearable device in the classroom, for a specific and agreed educational purpose
- the principal may determine to allow the use of mobile phones and wearable devices to make school payments, including for tuckshop, uniform shop and office payments, and/or

While the principal can make a decision to permit the use of mobile phones and wearable devices under these specific circumstances, consideration will 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.

What if my child requires electronic devices to support their learning or health?

Consideration of individual circumstances will be given to students who require temporary or ongoing exemptions for use of an electronic device, 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, will be documented in the student's OneSchool Support Provisions tab and communicated to school staff, including temporary relief staff via Compass.

What if I or someone else needs to contact my child at school?

- Parents needing to make contact with their child during the day can do so through the school office. Office staff will forward all messages to the student, where appropriate and possible or via an email to their school email account.
- If your child becomes unwell or experiences an issue during the school day, it is important that they report to a staff member in the first instance. Staff will follow appropriate school processes and make contact with parents and carers.
- In the event of an emergency at school, we will follow our Emergency Response Plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all
- If your child needs to notify their employer it must be organised after school hours, and offsite.
- Students participating in 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.

Who is responsible for my child's phone during the day?

- If your child chooses to bring a phone to school, they will be responsible for the mobile phone during the school day.

What can I do now, to prepare my child for this in 2024?

- Ensure your child has a way to make purchases at the tuckshop or canteen using one of the following ways:
 - cash
 - physical debit card

- online ordering through QKR, before 8:30am
 - alternative pre-loaded payment card – these work just like Go Cards and are available from the tuckshop for \$1.00. (Parents can preload money)
- Ensure your child has a calculator for class
 - Ensure your child's laptop is fully charged each day
 - Replace wireless ear pods/headphones with wired headphones that will connect to your child's school laptop
 - Encourage your child to wear a watch
 - Talk to your child about the importance of engaging in school

What will happen if my child doesn't put their phone "Away for the day"?

If your child chooses to bring a phone to school, and does not switch off and put it away for the day, they will receive consequences for not following our school procedures, in line with our Student Code of Conduct.

This may include temporary removal of the device and returning it to your child, requesting that you collect the device from the school, detention(s), afterschool detention(s), enrolment in an eSmart program, and requiring your child to submit their phone to a staff member each day. Our response to failure to follow these procedures will be equitable and proportionate to the behaviour exhibited.

What happens if my child is asked to hand in their electronic device / phone to the office?

- Mobile phones and other electronic devices handed into the office are to be switched off and will be placed in the school secure storage area.
- Students will be given a receipt for the device and parents will be notified via email / SMS / Compass.

How is the school supporting students to follow the procedures?

- providing a verbal reminder to the student or class about expected behaviour
- directing the student to place the mobile phone in storage (e.g. bag, locker, office)
- directing the student to switch off notifications on their wearable device
- removing the device to the office 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 (e.g. lunchtime)
- enrolling a student in eSmart program to complete Digital Licence or similar course, and/or
- increasing staff supervision of use in circumstances where the student requires access to their mobile phone or wearable device for medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons. For example, students who use smartphone apps for health monitoring and management.

Why are staff allowed to use mobile phones in school?

Staff follow appropriate processes outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct regarding

- model the appropriate use of electronic devices at school
- use electronic devices / phones to fulfil duties e.g., notify emergency services, report safety issues to administration, manage class rolls or Compass enquiries