



Tumby Bay Area School student use of mobile phones and personal devices

Purpose

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets or laptops that are not part of a separate Bring Your Own Device arrangement. This policy applies while students are at school, or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours.

While mobile phones and other such devices have significant advantages for use in the broader community, their use in schools is highly problematic. In schools, mobile phones can be significant distractors to learning and they can also pose significant risk to the safety of students through unfiltered access to the internet. There has been significant research around the impacts on adolescents of extended exposure to screen time.

Mobile phone use for school students

The department's position is that school aged students should not use their mobile phones at school during school hours.

Our school recognises 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.

Students may not use mobile phones or similar devices (such as smart watches) while on school grounds at any time. In addition, school staff are not to see or hear student devices of this kind at school.

This policy applies to all times students are at school and on school grounds including during and between classes and at all break times such as recess and lunch. Please note: 'school grounds' extends to school excursions, sports carnivals, camps and other events off the school site, where an approved school activity takes place.

Contact between students while they are at school and their parents/carers should occur through the school office on 86882003. Office staff will happily pass on messages to students.

Storage of personal devices

Students are expected to hand their phone in to Home Group teachers during roll call. Phones handed in to teachers will be delivered to the front office and stored there in sealed containers until the end of the day when they will be returned to students.

If the student does not comply

Students who choose to use their mobile phones for any reason will first be issued with a warning. Students will be required to give the phone/device to a staff member and it will be securely stored in the school office until the completion of the school day when they can be collected by students.

Students who choose to use their mobile phones for any purpose for a second time within a calendar year, will be issued with an internal suspension. Students are required to give the phone/device to a staff member and it will be securely stored in the school office so that the parent/carer of the student may collect the phone at their earliest convenience.

Students who choose to use their mobile phones for any purpose for a third time within a calendar year, will be suspended consistent with our school Behaviour Management Policy. Students are required to give the phone/device to a staff member and it will be securely stored in the school office so that the parent/carer of the student may collect the phone at their earliest convenience. Students who refuse to give their phone/device to a staff member will need to be collected by their parent.

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

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 school staff
- processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.

Enforce the school's policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Consider requests for exemptions from the school policy from parents, adult or independent students on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.

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.

School staff

Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment. Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment.

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).

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.

Staff are expected to model responsible phone usage and should not be using their mobile phone in the classroom. Staff are required to be reached by mobile phone on some occasions and have agreed to our staff protocols around this.

Students

Comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff.

If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with this policy, do so in a safe, responsible and respectful way and support peers to do the same.

Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person.

Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.

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.

Communication and review

Why have we as a school community made this decision? Our Governing Council consulted extensively with our parents and community when formulating this policy, have taken guidance from current research and other 'like' schools about implementation of these guidelines. Some of their findings are outlined below:

Mental health

Amount of screen time has implications for mental health. A study from the University of Bristol (2010) found that higher screen time was linked to lower mental health scores. Even if a student is engaged in high levels of physical activity, the amount of time spent on technology has an impact on psychological well-being.

Academic results

Extra screen time can impact on a student's grades - a 2015 study by Cambridge University found that spending more than 4 hours of leisure based screen time per day had a detrimental effect on students' grades. With each additional hour, students' grades decreased (Corde, r Atkin, Bamber, Brage, Dunn, Ekelund, Owens, van Sluijs, & Goodyer, 2015). Homework and reading had positive impact on secondary students' results.

Cognitive function

The proximity of digital devices has an impact on cognitive function - this includes the ability to focus - as part of the brain is actively working to not pick up or use the phone (Ward, Duke, Gneezy & Bos, 2017). This University of Texas at Austin study also found that people who are most dependent on their smartphones perform worse on tasks compared with their less dependent peers.

Eye Health

The number of students with short sightedness has almost doubled in the last 5 years, with more than 30% of Australian 17 year olds short sighted. Electronic devices can all cause tired eyes and digital eye strain otherwise known as 'computer vision syndrome' (Optometry Australia). The blue light emitted from LED devices is currently being researched to examine its impact on sleep cycles. There is plenty of evidence supporting the importance of a good night's sleep for well-being, learning and physical health.

Other

The current recommendation for daily screen time is 2 hours for children over the age of 2, although some organisations are now focused on strategies for managing technology rather than specific time limits. Face-to-face communication is very important for developing social interaction skills that include conversational skills, reading body language (including facial expressions) and developing the ability to repair conversations in real time. If students are engaging in screen time during break time, there are 'lost opportunities' for important social interactions, even if the technology-based activities they are engaging in are creative and social. These opportunities also include engaging in the many extra-curricular activities offered by the school during break times as well as time outside which is known to be beneficial for mental health. Optometry Australia recommends 'green time' time to balance blue light screen time.

Evidence

There are growing bodies of evidence showing that the possession and use of mobile phones in schools is having a detrimental effect on the learning of students.

The Mere Presence of Your Smartphone Reduces Brain Power, Study Shows

Intro article

<https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power>

Full study

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/691462>

Key points:

- The mere presence of one's own smartphone may occupy limited-capacity cognitive resources, thereby leaving fewer resources available for other tasks and undercutting cognitive performance
- These cognitive costs are highest for those highest in smartphone dependence
- Participants with their phones in another room significantly outperformed those with their phones on the desk, and they also slightly outperformed those participants who had kept their phones in a pocket or bag
- It didn't matter whether a person's smartphone was turned on or off, or whether it was lying face up or face down on a desk - having a smartphone within sight or within easy reach reduces a person's ability to focus and perform tasks because part of their brain is actively working to not pick up or use the phone.

Psychology and neuroscience blow-up the myth of effective multitasking

Intro article

<https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/psychology-and-neuroscience-blow-up-the-myth-of-effective-multitasking.html>

Key points:

- We sacrifice our power of full presence when we're multitasking, and we do so for a perceived benefit of improved productivity that simply doesn't exist.
- Research also shows that multitasking, i.e. trying to do two cognitive things at the same time, simply can't be done--the mind doesn't work that way.

- Studies have shown that it takes four times longer for the brain to recognize new things (further slowing down task completion) and that we have a much lower retention rate of what we learn while we are multitasking.

Mobile phones in the classroom: A helpful or harmful hindrance?

Intro article

<https://psychlopaedia.org/learning-and-development/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a-helpful-or-harmful-hindrance/>

Key points:

- Mobile phones can have a negative impact on learning through distraction and that their removal from the classroom can yield an improvement in student performance, especially for the most vulnerable
- students who did not use smartphones while participating in a lecture wrote 62 per cent more information in their notes and were able to recall more information than their phone-using counterparts
- With problematic phone use now considered a risk behaviour alongside alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use, schools should ensure they are addressing the psychological, social and health issues associated with technology (e.g. a lack of sleep from late night phone use, cyber bullying, sexting)

How smart is it to allow students to use mobile phones at school?

Intro article

<https://theconversation.com/how-smart-is-it-to-allow-students-to-use-mobile-phones-at-school-40621>

Key points:

- After schools banned mobile phones, test scores of students aged 16 increased by 6.4% of a standard deviation
- It is important to note that these gains are prominent amongst the lowest achievers.

At Tumby Bay Area School we acknowledge that Mobile phones and devices are an integral part of modern life and will continue to be so for our students. We are aware that as educators we play a significant role in assisting children to manoeuvre the online world and as such will continue to address issues such as cyber bullying, e- safety and phone etiquette in our classes, particularly through our Wellbeing for Learning programs.

The Policy will be consulted upon regularly at Governing Council Meetings and reviewed annually.

Supporting information

This policy is supported by other TBAS documentation and policies including:

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Cyber Safety Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- BYOD Policy