

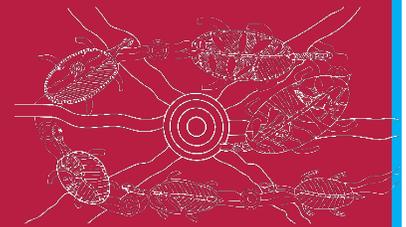


Hawkesbury High school

# MOBILE DEVICES POLICY

October 2023

2023



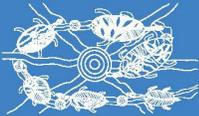
## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Mobile devices such as mobile phones, smart watches, tablets and other devices with the ability to connect to the internet have become an important part of students', teachers' and parents' daily lives. We use mobile devices to connect to the world, connect to each other, and access services, data and information. This policy acknowledges the usefulness of mobile devices; however, this policy also acknowledges that the use of mobile devices in schools needs to be regulated to assist and educate students, parents and staff to best use mobile devices in safe, responsible and informed ways. This policy is a revision of the school's 2019 policy and was developed in response to the **NSW Government's ban on mobile phones in schools** and in consultation with students, parents, staff and the broader Hawkesbury High School community.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### THE SCHOOL

At Hawkesbury High School, all students, staff, parents and community members are expected to follow the school's STAR values – core rules and expectations built on rights and responsibilities to be **SAFE**, a **TEAM PLAYER**, an **ACHIEVER**, and to be **RESPECTFUL**. The school's STAR values are explicitly taught and all students are expected to observe these values and the associated behaviour expectations listed below:

 <h1 style="text-align: center;">CORE VALUES AND EXPECTATIONS</h1> 			
I am <b>SAFE</b> when I:	I am a <b>TEAM PLAYER</b> when I:	I am an <b>ACHIEVER</b> when I:	I am <b>RESPECTFUL</b> when I:
Wear full school uniform and appropriate shoes	Work with and support others	Bring all required equipment to school	Communicate politely with everyone
Attend class on time and remain in class	Respond to teacher feedback or instructions	Actively participate in learning	Allow one person to speak at a time
Protect my privacy and act responsibly online	Communicate my concerns, questions or problems	Attempt all tasks regardless of difficulty	Use appropriate language that does not include swearing or offensive words
Follow teacher instructions	Listen to others' concerns, questions or problems	Stay on task	Allow others to express their views or opinions without putting them down
Avoid behaviour that may endanger myself or others	Accept that others may have different points of view	Ask for help when I need it	Look after my learning environment

While all STAR values are relevant to this policy, particular emphasis needs to be drawn on the following when setting expectations for the use of mobile devices at Hawkesbury High School:

- Actively participating in learning
- Staying on task
- Protecting privacy and acting responsibly online
- Avoiding behaviour that may endanger self and others
- Communicating politely with everyone
- Using appropriate language
- Allowing others to express their views and opinions without putting them down

The school recognises that the use of mobile devices and related activities such as access to social media apps and the internet has created challenges for students, staff and parents that did not exist even a decade ago. The following was taken into consideration when developing this policy:

- A recognition that **the use of mobile phones in schools is banned** by the NSW Government.
- An acknowledgement that use of and familiarisation with technology, including mobile phones, is essential to the future livelihood and productivity of students and that there are benefits to the use of mobile phones.
- The ongoing prevalence of harm to students, including instances of student suicide and self-harm, allegedly resulting from cyberbullying and other harms linked to mobile phones and the use of social media apps optimized for use on mobile phones.
- Indicators about a general decline in student wellbeing including: a 10 year high in youth suicide; reported increase in self-harm, depression and anxiety over the last two decades; as well as a decline in performance in maths, reading and science, with a disproportionate fall among the lowest performing students.
- Divided expert opinion on the impacts of mobile phone use on students' psychological, physical and mental health and overall wellbeing.
- A body of evidence on harms such as distraction in class and detrimental impacts on students' psychological, physical and mental health.
- A need to assist schools to meet their duty of care obligations to students in light of the varied harms that mobile phones may be correlated to.
- A recognition that in NSW public schools electronic device use is governed by diverse departmental policies, including technology, network access, social media, curriculum and bring your own device policies (BYOD).
- An understanding that technology is ever-evolving and requires flexible, iterative and technology-neutral responses.
- A belief that the diverse and emerging views of all members of the school community and other stakeholders should inform the policies and practices employed in schools.
- The school's ongoing commitment and obligation to address emerging issues in regards to student wellbeing, health and safety and promote the digital capacities of students.

*(Review into the non-educational use of mobile devices in NSW schools, 2018)*

## TEACHING STAFF

The role of teaching staff is to create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments, in line with Standard 4 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Teachers select and use relevant teaching strategies to develop knowledge, skills, problem-solving, and critical and creative thinking. These strategies may use a range of appropriate tools and resources, including mobile devices, to engage students in their learning. In addition, teachers have the responsibility to establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks, ensure students' wellbeing and safety by implementing school and DoE policy requirements. Teachers also incorporate strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

## STUDENTS

All students at Hawkesbury High School are expected to follow the school's core values and expectations, also known as STAR values. Of particular relevance to the school's Mobile Devices Policy are the following values and expectations:

- Mobile phones must be turned off and placed out of sight during school hours, including during breaks and excursions
- Protect own privacy and act responsibly online
- Follow teacher instructions
- Avoid behaviour that may endanger self or others, including keeping hands off the belongings of others
- Stay on task
- Actively participate in learning
- Communicate politely with everyone and follow instructions without arguing
- Allow others to express their views or opinions without putting them down
- Use appropriate language that does not include swearing or offensive words

The school's core values and expectations are explicitly taught, and they are visibly displayed in all learning environments and around the school. These values and expectations were developed in consultation with the school community, including students, parents and staff, and all students are expected to follow them every day in every classroom, in every learning environment, at all times.

## PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Parents are valued partners who work with the school to support their children to meet the school's core values and expectations. Parents are expected to actively participate and help their children develop positive connections, support learning and the school's values and expectations. Parents and caregivers play an important role in working with the school to develop their child's understandings, skills and character and to work with the school to ensure that teaching and learning is not disrupted by unacceptable behaviour in the classroom, in the playground and other school activities. Parents have the rights and responsibilities to:

- Support their children in their learning

- Inform the school of circumstances that may impact on the student's progress, wellbeing or behaviour
- Communicate concerns to the school
- Be informed if the school has concerns relating to their child
- Inform the school of any knowledge they may have of bullying incidents involving any students at the school
- Support the school in the implementation of its policies
- Apply for an exemption if they believe there is sufficient cause or evidence to support their child's use of a mobile phone at school.

## MOBILE DEVICES POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Hawkesbury High School is committed to a safe, responsible and informed use of mobile devices that foster student engagement in learning, have clear usage boundaries, and manage inappropriate usage fairly in line with the school's Discipline Policy. The school's Mobile Devices Policy is consistent with the following legislation and DoE policies and procedures:

- Mobile Phones in Schools Policy 2023
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- The Disability Standards for Education (2005)
- Core Rules in NSW Government Schools
- Values in NSW Public Schools
- Bullying: Preventing and Responding to Student Bullying in Schools Policy
- Suspension and Expulsion of Students – Procedures
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

## MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES FOR USE OF MOBILE PHONES

The following guidelines are intended to clarify the appropriate use of mobile devices at Hawkesbury High School. Mobile devices **include** mobile phones, headphones and earphones – both wired and wireless, music players, smart watches, tablets, or any other mobile device identified by the school that falls into that category. For the purposes of this policy, laptops are also defined as mobile devices. However, the use of approved laptops is guided by the school's BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Policy.

Any parents or carers who feel that this policy may negatively impact on their child due to a disability, illness, or any other reason, are encouraged to contact the Principal and apply for an exemption.

Inappropriate usage of mobile devices will be managed fairly in line with the school's Discipline Policy.

## Management Procedures for Use of Mobile Phones

For the purposes of these management procedures, **authorised** use of a mobile phone refers to any use for which a student is given **explicit permission** by a teacher at the school, including holders of a **Phone License**. **Unauthorised** use of a mobile phone includes any use of a mobile phone without permission, including having a mobile phone in sight, regardless of whether the phone is being actively used by a student.

### General Management Procedures

1. Mobile phones must be **turned off** and placed **out of sight** during school hours, including during breaks and excursions. Mobile phones must be turned off as soon as students arrive on school grounds.
2. Students may use mobile phones to make **front office payments** and school **canteen payments** in the canteen line only. Phones must be turned off as soon as a payment is made.
3. **Year 12** students may use their mobile phones in the **Senior Study** only.
4. Mobile phones may be turned on after the last bell sounds at the end of the school day.
5. If an **exemption** is granted by the Principal, a mobile phone may be used at school for learning adjustments that are part of a learning plan and for health and wellbeing reasons.
6. Parents or carers can apply for an **exemption** directly to the Principal. Supporting evidence must be supplied with any applications for an exemption.
7. Students with an approved exemption will be issued with a **Phone License**. A mobile phone may only be used in places and for purpose/s identified in the Phone License.

### Management Procedures for Unauthorised use of Mobile Phones

1. Students who are sighted with a mobile phone at school, used in an unauthorised manner, including in the playground, will be told that their phone will be confiscated. A head teacher, deputy principal, or the Principal will be notified and the mobile phone will then be **confiscated** for the duration of the school day.
2. If a student's mobile phone is confiscated on **repeated** occasions, the phone may be kept at school until a parent or carer collects the phone. The phone will not be returned directly to the student after **repeated unauthorised** use.
3. If a student **refuses** to hand over the phone after unauthorised use, the student will be **formally cautioned** and parents/carers will be informed.
4. If a student **refuses** to hand over their mobile phone after being formally cautioned for repeated unauthorised use, the student may be **suspended** from school.
5. As an alternative to suspending a student for repeated refusal to hand over a phone for **unauthorised** use, a student's **phone may be suspended** from school at the discretion of the Principal. This will require parents to ensure that their child does not bring a mobile phone to school for the duration of the phone suspension.