



Education &
Communities

Public Schools NSW



MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL

PROCEDURES

Rationale

Mobile phones have become an important and invaluable part of our modern lifestyle. At Annandale Public School we acknowledge that there are some issues associated with the use of mobile phones in school. These include:

- Health concerns for young children using mobile phones excessively
- The possibility of expensive phones being lost or stolen
- Safe storage of phones during the school day
- Inappropriate use of phones.

The school understands there are times when possession of a mobile phone can provide a sense of safety and security while travelling to and from school, enabling urgent calls or contact from parents.

Purpose

To ensure that mobile phone usage does not disrupt the school's learning environment and to clarify the responsibilities of students and acceptable mobile phone usage.

Implementation

At Annandale Public School **we discourage students from bringing mobile phones to school.** In the primary school setting if an emergency call is required to be made, the school teaching staff or office staff would make those phone calls.

In general, students should not bring any items of value to school. These items can be easily lost or stolen. If a mobile phone is required for reasons of specific safety or urgency before or after school, then the child will keep the mobile phone in their bag and turned off for the entirety of the day. The mobile phone may be turned on as soon as the bell has rung at the end of the day to check messages from parents.

Before allowing their child to bring a mobile phone to school parents should consider the following:

- Where will the student keep the phone for safe keeping during the day? Do you want it in your child's bag or should it be stored in the office?
- How will you control your child's use of the phone?

The following rules apply to students who bring mobile phones to school:

- Students bring mobile phones to school at their own risk. The school will not accept responsibility for damage or theft.
- Students who require mobile phones, as a safety measure to and from school, will be expected to turn the phone off as soon as they enter school grounds.
- The phone is the responsibility of the student at all times unless parents request in writing that the phone be stored in the school safe during the day. (In this case it is the student's responsibility to take the phone to the office before school and collect it immediately after the bell is rung at 3.00pm).
- The name of the student, parental permission note and the student's mobile phone number must be registered with the office.
- No mobile phones are to be taken on excursions unless the Principal has approved it.
- Parents must counsel their child on the appropriate (and inappropriate use of mobile phones).
- The use of mobile phone cameras or videos is not permitted at school.
- Any student found using a mobile phone in an inappropriate manner (bullying, harassing, intimidating) will have the phone confiscated and returned to the parent. The student would also be disciplined following DoE and school based Fair Discipline procedures.

Inappropriate use of mobile phones

Generally a mobile phone will be used inappropriately if :

- It disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school, or
- It threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of any person
- Is in breach of the law or,
- Students using their phone to bully, intimidate or otherwise harass other people through SMS, MMS, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone.

If a child brings their mobile phone to school and does not follow the appropriate rules the following consequences will be applied:

- First offence - Phone is turned off, handed to a staff member and placed in the office. Executive staff will contact the student's parents requesting phone to be collected at the end of the day.
- Second offence - Phone is turned off, handed over to a staff member and placed in the office. Mobile phone to be picked up by parents and the student cannot have their phone at school for a negotiated period of time.

Department of Education Policy Reference and Framework

In 2011 and 2015, the Department of Education and Training (now Department of Education), updated the Department's policy and procedures – Suspension and Expulsion of School Students.

The rationale underpinning the changes is driven by the rise of social networking sites and increasing sophistication of mobile phones which has meant that bullying and harassment related to school may occur out of school hours or off the school site.

The policy states that the school discipline code, and therefore the Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures **have applications outside of school hours where there is a clear and close relationship between the behaviour of the students and the school.**

As a result of these changes students may also be suspended for the inappropriate use of mobile phones regardless of where or when or where the offence occurs.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying will be managed through the school's anti-bullying policy. In some cases disciplinary action or reporting to the NSW Police Force and the School Safety and Response Hotline will be necessary if a crime has been committed.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in 2019 or earlier if there is any change to use of this type of technology.

Document history and details

Approval date

27 April, 2017

Approving Officer

Dace Elletson (Principal)

Implementation Date

Term 2, 2017