

Personal Mobile Device Policy (Phones and SMART Watches)

Rationale

St Catherine's takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student safety and wellbeing, along with the development of social skills and positive behaviour very seriously. Whilst we acknowledge that we live in a technology-rich world where mobile devices are an important communication tool, research has found that mobile devices can be disruptive in classrooms and are open to misuse at school. The unregulated presence of personal mobile devices in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention, regulate emotion and build resilience.

This policy aims to remove an unnecessary distraction from our classrooms and playgrounds, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn in a more focused, positive and supportive environment.

While it is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone or SMART watch may give parents/guardians reassurance that their child can contact them in emergency situations involving personal security and safety, this is not necessary during the school day when students have access to supervised environments and existing school communication processes. It is essential that all communication between students and anyone outside the school, during the school day, be made with full knowledge of the school.

Research has shown that in primary school classes where there is a ban on personal mobile devices, students have a greater ability to better resolve conflict, there is reduced comparison between peers in the areas of material possessions and physical attributes and abilities and finally, competition does not significantly impede class cohesion. In other words, a ban on mobile phones in school has a positive effect on the classroom climate for pupils of younger school-age (1).

Procedures, Practices and Processes

- It is strongly recommended that students do not bring personal mobile devices to school. Students should only bring a mobile device to school if required for essential communication before or after school, as a safety measure when commuting to and from school or for health and medical reasons.
- Only digital devices issued by the school may be used by students during the school day.
- Students are not permitted to access personal mobile devices during school hours including, but not limited to:
 - mobile phones
 - tablets
 - gaming devices
 - devices with a camera
 - data / sim enabled smart watches and fitness trackers
 - air pods
 - and other devices that have the potential to communicate and access mobile technologies in similar ways to a mobile phone.

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- All personal mobile devices **MUST BE TURNED OFF** and handed in to the School Office when a student arrives at school. At the end of the school day devices may be collected from the Office.
- Students are not to use personal mobile devices to contact parents in a way which would circumvent normal school procedures. While at school, students are the responsibility of the school and all instances that require emergency contact and communication with parents/guardians **MUST** be through an appropriate staff member or a member of the Leadership Team.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains the first point of contact to ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in an appropriate way. If parents/guardians have a need to make contact with their son or daughter during the day, this is to be made through the school office.
- Personal mobile devices brought to school are not to be used by other students.
- Students are not permitted to photograph, film or voice record students or staff while on school grounds or while in school uniform. If a student is found taking photographs or video footage with a mobile phone or smart watch of either students or teachers, this will be regarded as a serious offence and disciplinary action, as sanctioned by the Principal, will be taken.
- If images of other students or teachers have been taken, the mobile phone or smart watch will not be returned to the student until the images have been removed by the student in the presence of an appropriate staff member. This includes images etc. in the recycle bin or saved to a cloud service.
- Any student using mobile technology or device to harass another person will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use mobile technology and devices to target, harass or offend another person. As such, the Principal may consider it appropriate to involve the Police.
- Personal mobile devices are used at their owner's risk. In the event of the loss, theft or damage of any device, the school will accept no liability.
- Contravention of this policy will result in the device being confiscated and returned to the student at the end of the school day. Alternatively, a parent/guardian may be contacted to collect the device from the school office.
- This policy also applies to students during assessment, school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.
- The Principal reserves the right to withdraw permission for a student to bring mobile personal devices to school.
- Parents/Guardians who require their child to use a personal mobile device during the school day must submit an application (attached below) to the Principal that outlines the needs and functions of the device. The Principal will determine the outcome of the application.

Responsibilities of Students

Students will:

- *Deliver* personal mobile devices to the school office each morning (switched off) so they can be securely stored during school hours.
- *Report* to a staff member or visit the school office to ensure they are assisted in an appropriate way at all times if they recognise they feel unsafe.
- *Behave* in a manner that is consistent with the values of St Catherine's and contribute positively to the image of the school when wearing / using a personal device at school. This includes while on school grounds before and after school.
- *Show respect* for themselves and for others when using a personal device at school.
- *Adhere* to St Catherine's Personal Mobile Device Policy.

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Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers will:

- *Educate* their children about the responsible, social and ethical use of technology.
- *Notify* the class teacher/school office of any changes to daily pick-up routines etc.
- *Contact* the school office, in cases of emergency, to ensure a child is reached quickly and assisted in an appropriate way.
- *Maintain* up to date personal contact information through the Parent Portal or school office.
- *Submit* an application to the Principal, if their child requires the use of a personal device during the school day, that outlines the needs and functions of the device.
- *Adhere* to St Catherine's Personal Mobile Device Policy that all mobile devices are to be handed to the School Office on arrival at school unless permission is granted for health and safety reasons for it to be worn or kept in the child's possession during school hours.

Responsibilities of the School

The school staff will:

- *Communicate* clear expectations about the use of personal devices at regular intervals throughout the school year.
- *Educate* students on the responsible, ethical and safe social use of technology as part of the ICT General Capability.
- *Notify* parents of a breach of policy and seek rectification within a reasonable timeframe.
- *Provide* supervision of students and communication avenues with parents/carers until children are collected from school. The school office remains the first point of contact for all families.
- *Model* the appropriate use of and engagement with their own personal mobile devices.
- *Keep* their phones turned on, and on their person, while on playground duty for emergency procedures and workplace health and safety purposes.
- *Reserve* the right to adjust the Personal Mobile Device processes as deemed necessary for health and/or other relevant matters.

References

1. THE EFFECT OF MOBILE PHONE BAN IN SCHOOLS ON THE EVALUATION OF CLASSROOM CLIMATE. S. Dobešová Cakirpaloglu¹, T. Čech², M. Maléřová², H. Adámková². Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology and Abnormal Psychology (CZECH REPUBLIC)
2. Seraphim Dempsey, Seán Lyons, Selina McCoy. Economics of Innovation and New Technology 28 (8), 798-815, 2019
3. Xianchen Liu, Yachen Luo, Zhen-Zhen Liu, Yanyun Yang, Jianghong Liu, Cun-Xian Jia. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking 23 (5), 303-311, 2020

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Personal Mobile Device - APPLICATION

Note: This form is ONLY required if a child is required to wear or have a personal device on them during school hours.

Student Name: _____

Class: _____ B O W (Please circle) Teacher: _____

Student Mobile No: _____

Parent Name: _____

Parent Contact No: _____

I wish to apply for permission for my son/daughter to carry a personal mobile device during school hours. I understand that permission to carry a personal mobile device on to school grounds during school hours will be granted only for health and safety reasons.

We (parents/guardians) agree to the conditions set down in the Personal Mobile Device Policy and understand that violation of the Policy will result in the confiscation of the device and the loss of privilege to bring a personal device to school.

Reason a Personal Mobile Device is required to be worn/carried during school hours:

Make / Model of Personal Mobile Device

Parent Signature: _____ Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approved Yes / No Principal Signature: _____

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