

College Mobile Device Policy



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Purpose and Rationale:

The widespread ownership of mobile devices among our 7–12 students requires that the College Leadership Team, teachers, students, and parents work together to implement steps to ensure that such mobile devices are used responsibly at school. Both the revised Mobile Device and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy are designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones and/or devices can be clearly identified and addressed. There is a significant volume of global research that indicates a real need to limit the amount of screen time we have each day, for the sake of our physical and emotional wellbeing. Schools now share that responsibility with students and families.

St Joseph's Catholic College accepts that parents provide their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. Parents may also be concerned about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone, gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently. However, parents are reminded that in cases of emergency during the school day, College reception is the preferred point of contact and relevant staff will ensure students are promptly contacted and assisted in the appropriate way.

The St Joseph's mobile device policy aligns with other Catholic Schools Broken Bay High Schools and NSW Government schools.

For the purposes of this policy, a mobile device is defined as any electronic device. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones, smart watches, iPads and other tablet computers, wireless headphones/earphones, dedicated games consoles and any other internet-connected devices.

The policy states:

- Students' mobile phones must be turned off and out of sight during regular college hours (8:30am to 3:00pm) – this includes both recess and lunch.
- Mobile phones and devices must be out of sight during formal lessons, or whilst on an excursion unless permission has been granted by a teacher.
- Mobile phones and devices will be handed in until the end of the day if they are accessed during recess or lunch, during formal lessons, assemblies, whilst on a school excursion, retreat or camp.
- Mobile devices should not be used as a communication tool between 8:30am and 3:00pm.
- In accordance with NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA), mobile phones and devices (including smart watches) are not permitted to be with a student during any formal examinations or assessment tasks.
- Students are not permitted to access social media platforms from a mobile phone and/or device at any time whilst on the College premises or at a school event.
- The camera, video and/or audio recording capabilities of a mobile phone and/or device are not permitted to be used at school or at a school event without the permission of a teacher.
- The College Leadership team will manage individual requests from parents and/or carers, and students, for any exemptions to the policy.
- The College Leadership team may allow students to use mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as for an educational purpose, to achieve student health and wellbeing outcomes, or as part of reasonable adjustment to enable students with specific needs to participate in education on the same basis as other students.
- A smart watch may be worn and used as a watch but cannot be used for communication in any form during school hours and are not permitted to be worn during any assessment task.

Mobile phones and other non-educational electronic devices are banned within the school premises, this includes classrooms and outdoor areas. When at school all mobile devices must be switched off and placed in the student's locker. We prefer that students do not have phones at school. However, we realise that students may be in possession of mobile devices for a variety of reasons and therefore the school has adopted the following policy:

- Students are discouraged from bringing mobile devices to school.
- During the school day, supervising teachers are responsible for allowing students access to their mobile device for what is deemed educational purposes ONLY, determined by the supervising staff member.
- Supervising staff members during out-of-school hours will be responsible for student access during designated times.
- The school accepts no responsibility for mobile devices.

When students do NOT comply with the policy: A device is seen or heard

First breach of guidelines: Mobile device will be handed in to student reception. Recorded in Compass. Device collected at the end of day; technology misuse will be entered as a demerit in Compass.

Second breach of guidelines: Mobile device will be handed in to student reception. Recorded in Compass. Device collected at the end of day; technology misuse will be entered as a demerit in Compass.

Subsequent breach of guidelines: Mobile device will be handed in to student reception on the third occasion that students receive a technology misuse demerit, parents will be contacted, and they will need to collect the device from the office. If students continue not to comply with the policy parents will be contacted and further sanctions may be imposed.

****If a student(s) does NOT comply with a teacher's instructions as it relates to a mobile phone and/or device, the student(s) will be sent to the Director of Wellbeing and/or Assistant Principals. Respective parents/carers will be contacted, this issue then becomes a discipline issue not a mobile device issue.**

Continued refusal to comply with the mobile phone and device guidelines may result in a formal college suspension.

Management Plan

Our School's Approach:

St Joseph's College supports the restrictions of mobile devices based on current academic research.

- Mobile device use in schools can impact student learning and wellbeing. Restricting mobile device use at school aims to increase focus in classrooms, remove distractions and promote positive social interaction, while reducing the potential for online bullying.
- St Joseph's College has strong teaching and learning practices to support students in the classroom using various forms of appropriate technology, which maximises the benefits and minimises the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school.
- We foster a safe learning environment which supports and enhances each child's social and emotional health through our wellbeing and diverse learning teams.

Exemptions:

St Joseph's understands there may be students who have a medical, wellbeing or learning need which will require them to access a mobile device as defined in their individual education plan (IEP):

- Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances.
- Parents and carers can request an exemption, and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the Principal's discretion. All exemptions will require relevant supporting documentation e.g. medical letter from supporting doctor.
- Any granted exemptions will be documented on school records for all staff to access and support.

Contacting Students:

St Joseph's College understands there will always be emergencies when parents need to get on contact with students or vice versa during the school day. This needs to be kept to a minimum, with the exception of emergencies, to avoid disturbing student learning.

- Parents and carers can contact the college through the college office by phoning
02 7256 2137 during school hours of 8.00am to 3.30pm
- Students will also be able to contact parents or carers through the school office if an urgent matter arises during the school day.
- Provisions for contacting parent/carers after school hours will be made with supervising teachers.

For Parents/Carers and students:

- Mobile phones may only be used before and after school hours.
- Parents are not to contact student via mobile devices during the school day.
- Where parent/carers needs to contact their child during the school day, they are to contact the school's front office on 02 7256 2137, and the school will assist in the most appropriate way.