

Mobile Phone and Other Electronic Devices Policy 2023

1. Purpose

St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens (the College) is aware that mobile phones and other electronic devices, when used appropriately, offer students and parents advantages in terms of communication and a sense of personal safety. However, mobile phones and other electronic devices sometimes have a negative impact on the learning environment and the safety and wellbeing of students.

The College acknowledges that mobile phones and other electronic devices:

- Can cause distraction for students in the classroom and also during scheduled breaks. This can occur even when they not being used, if on silent — or even when powered off.
- Can be used in a range of learning activities, however they can create a range of hazards when brought to College.
- Are valuable items that can easily be lost, stolen or damaged in a school environment.
- Can be used inappropriately to bully, intimidate or harass people, which can have serious consequences including police involvement.
- Can provide a level of personal safety and accordingly, parents and students may wish to have a mobile phone or other electronic device in their possession. However, the right of a student to have access to a mobile phone or other electronic device at the College must be balanced with the responsibility to use it appropriately.

As a College we are therefore committed to educating our students about the most appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices and implementing best educational practice in regard to their place in the school environment. The College has a duty of care to ensure the safety of students at all times. Reducing use of mobile phones and other electronic devices is one way in which the College can protect students from threats such as cyber bullying, inappropriate material and negative influence of social media.

This policy outlines the College expectations of students, staff and parents when it comes to students using mobile phones and other electronic devices, and the procedure for misuse by a student.

2. Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled at the College. A Year 12 student is considered to be enrolled until the business day after the completion of their final exam.

The application of this policy is not limited to the College's site and operating hours. It extends to all activities and events that are school-related, including when students are:

- On school grounds.
- At any in College related activities or representing the College (including for example camps, events, excursions, incursions, retreats, sport, awards nights).
- Representing the College, including when off campus, or online in a digital environment.
- Travelling to and from school, as well as to and from off-site activities.
- Wearing the school uniform.

- Under the College's legal duty of care.
- Otherwise engaging in behaviour which in the reasonable opinion of the College may affect student health and safety, student relationships, staff health and safety, staff-student relationships, or the reputation of the College.

To the extent of any inconsistency between this policy and any of the College's other policies, procedures and rules, the expectations and processes set out in the Student Code of Conduct shall prevail. In this respect, the Code of Conduct should be regarded as an overarching summary of the College's expectations and processes regarding student behaviours.

3. Definition

This policy refers to "mobile phones and other electronic devices," and this term also incorporates the use of devices including, but not limited to, iPods, smart watches, digital cameras and electronic gaming devices.

4. Expectations

Students are expected to ensure that any use of their mobile phone or other electronic device is in accordance with the School's rules, values, expectations, policies and procedures at all times.

5. Inappropriate Use of Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices

The College deems inappropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices to include use that is (but is not limited to):

- disrupting or is likely to disrupt the learning environment;
- accessing, sharing and/or storing inappropriate content;
- interfering with the operation of the College;
- threatening or is likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of any person;
- in breach of any law, including photography without permission of those being filmed (particularly in locations such as bathrooms and change rooms); and
- or is perceived to be bullying, intimidating or otherwise harassing other people through any voice call, text message, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the mobile phone or other electronic device.

To assist the College in minimising the risk that using a mobile phone or other electronic devices can have, the following protocols outlined in this policy are in place

6. Mobile Phone and Other Electronic Device Use – Kinder to Year 10 Students

Once arriving at College, JS students hand in phones to their classroom teachers. The mobile phones or other electronic devices of Yrs 5 -12 students should be turned off and kept out of sight in the students' bag or locker. Students are not permitted to have mobile phones or other electronic devices with them in class, unless in the rare case that an exception is provided expressly by the College.

Unless requested by a teacher, students must never lend a phone to another student for calls, text messaging or for use as a camera or video recording device. If students need to contact their parents or another person during the school day, they can seek assistance from their Sub-school Reception.

Any inappropriate use of mobile phones or other electronic devices will be recorded on the student's record of behaviour.

Please note that a teacher may occasionally request students to use their mobile phones or other electronic devices for educational purposes – for example digital documentation of work in practical subjects. In such circumstances, students

will be provided with advance notice and will be permitted to use their mobile phones or other electronic devices for the limited purpose of completing the class work. Any student found to be accessing content that is not relevant to the class may be subject to consequences, including those outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Students will be required to return their mobile phone or other electronic devices to their bag or locker after the activity has ended.

7. Mobile Phone and Other Electronic Device Use – Year 11 and Year 12

Year 11 and Year 12 students may do the following:

- Bring their mobile phones or other electronic devices to class.
- Switch their mobile phones or other electronic devices on once they arrive to class and are permitted to do so by their teacher.
- Use their mobile phones or other electronic devices for specific educational purposes only relating to the subject, for the duration in which use is approved by the classroom teacher.
- Year 12 may use their mobile phones or other electronic devices during breaks in their student common area.

8. Mobile Phones/Devices during Excursions (including Sport) and Events

Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones or other electronic devices during excursions, incursions or other school-related vents unless they have permission from the supervising teacher to do so.

Any use permitted must be in line with the College's expectations of appropriate use as outlined in this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

9. Responsibility for Mobile Phones and Other Electronic Devices

Students bring their mobile phones and other electronic devices to College at their own risk – the College and its staff will not accept any responsibility for loss or damage to mobile phones or other electronic devices that occurs in connection with the College, or for investigating such loss or damage.

10. Consequences for Breach

Where a student uses their mobile phone or other electronic devices in breach of the College's policies (including this policy, the Appropriate Use of Mobile Phone/Device Policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct), a member of staff will immediately request that the mobile phones/device to be switched off and handed to them.

If a student refuses to promptly hand their mobile phone or other electronic device over to the staff member, the students phone may be collected by the Head of School (or their delegate) who will store it securely.

The confiscation will be recorded, and the student can sign their mobile phone or other electronic device out at the end of the College day. However, in the case of repeated confiscations of a student's mobile phone or other electronic device will require the student's parent(s) to come and collect in person.

The student may face consequences for their actions in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If a mobile phone or other electronic device is used by a student during an assessment, loss of marks may occur for the task.

If a mobile phone or other electronic device is suspected to contain illegal content, it will be secured by the Deputy Principal or their delegate and the student's parents/guardians will be contacted. The College is committed to complying with its mandatory reporting obligations, which include making a report to police if required.

11. Contacting Students During the Day

Parents are asked to contact the College Sub School Reception on (02) 49195400 if they wish to send a message to their child, rather than calling them or texting their child on their mobile phone or other electronic device whilst they are at College or at a College related event.

Staff should be alerted and exceptions requested if a student has special circumstances requiring the use of their mobile phone or other electronic device during school hours (e.g. health issues). Where appropriate, permission will be provided by a relevant member of staff.

Parents should otherwise note that in the case of an emergency, the College remains the most appropriate point of contact to reach their child.

12. Students Making Contact With Home or External Company (eg Work)

Students requiring to make contact with home or an external person/company are to go to the appropriate Sub School Reception and ask permission first with reasonable requests.

13. Implementation

This policy is implemented through a combination of:

- staff information;
- effective student supervision;
- effective incident notification procedures;
- effective communication procedures;
- effective management of student use of their mobile phone or other electronic device in breach of the College's values, expectations, policies and procedures;
- effective record keeping procedures; and
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

St Philip's Christian College Port Stephens

"For the Whole of Their Life"

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*Composition and Review St Philips Christian College Port Stephens Executive Leadership Team
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