

STUDENT USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOLS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Implementation Term 4 2023



AUDIENCE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy and the procedures apply to all students at Georges River College Peakhurst Campus. In this policy and procedure, the term 'mobile phone' refers to:

- Mobile phones
- Smart watches
- AirPods / earbuds / headphones
- Tablets
- Other devices which allow communication (eg gaming consoles)

POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Students are not allowed to use mobile phones at school, including during recess and lunch.

1.2 The Principal will manage individual requests from parents and/or carers, and students, for any exemptions to the policy.

1.3 The Principal may allow students to use mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as 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.

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

Georges River College Peakhurst Campus supports the restrictions of mobile phones in accordance with the NSW Department of Education: Student Use of Mobile Phones in Schools policy:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-management-schools/student-use-of-mobile-phones>

Mobile phone use in schools can impact student learning and wellbeing. Restricting mobile phone use at school aims to increase focus in classrooms, remove distractions and promote positive social interaction, while reducing the potential for online bullying. Georges River College Peakhurst Campus 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 prepares 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 learning support teams.

Georges River College Peakhurst Campus has elected to use the following approach. All mobile phones will be off and away for the full school day, including recess and lunch. This will mean that students will have a responsibility to turn off their phone and store it safely in their school bag for the course of the school day. This is an approved NSW Department of Education approach and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing commitment to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment.

EXEMPTIONS

Georges River College Peakhurst Campus understands there may be students who have medical, wellbeing or learning needs which will require them to access a mobile phone. Requests for exemptions are to be made to the Principal using the Exemption Application Form available through the school. A letter from a medical specialist stating when and how the mobile phone is to be used, will be required as supporting documentation. The Principal or their delegate will determine whether or not an exemption will be approved. If they approve an exemption, they will work with the parents/carers to prepare a Phone Exemption Plan.

CONTACTING STUDENTS

Georges River College Peakhurst Campus understands there are occasions where parents and carers may need to make urgent contact with their child or vice versa during the school day. To avoid disturbing the student learning, we try to keep this to a minimum. Contact can always be made through the school office in the case of an emergency.

PROCEDURE

Students are responsible for any valuable items they bring to school.

As students arrive at school and prior to entering the school gates, they must turn off their mobile phones and store them safely in their school bags. Their phones must remain in their bag for the full school day, including during recess and lunch. This also includes any school-based excursions or sporting events.

At the conclusion of the school day, students are allowed to retrieve their mobile phones from their bags once outside the school gates.

Alternately, students may choose to leave their phones at the front office for the day, where they will be stored securely.

CONSEQUENCES

If a student's mobile phone is seen or heard by a member of staff, the following consequences will occur:

1. First breach – Level 1

The student's mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher, labelled and stored securely. The phone will then be taken to the school office and locked in a secure cabinet. At the end of the school day, the student may come to the school office and collect their phone. A negative incident will be logged in Sentral, advising of the first breach, and a letter emailed home to the parent/carer informing them of the breach, and consequences for any subsequent breaches.

2. Second breach – Level 2

The student's mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher, labelled and stored securely. The phone will then be taken to the school office and locked in a secure cabinet. A negative incident will be logged in Sentral advising of the second breach. The student's parent/carer will be notified by the Deputy Principal. At the end of the school day, the student may come to the school office and collect their phone. A letter will be emailed home to the parent/carer informing them of the breach, and consequences for any subsequent breaches.

3. Third breach – Level 3

The student's mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher, labelled and stored securely. The phone will then be taken to the school office and locked in a secure cabinet. A negative incident will be logged in Sentral, recording the third breach. The Deputy Principal will meet with the student and a formal caution of suspension will be issued. The student's parent/carer will be notified, and they will be required to collect the mobile phone. The student will not be allowed to collect the phone themselves.

4. Subsequent breaches – Level 4

The student's mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher, labelled and stored securely. The phone will then be taken to the school office and locked in a secure cabinet. A negative incident will be logged in Sentral, recording the subsequent breach. In consultation with the Principal, the Deputy Principal will meet with the student and a suspension will be issued. The student's parent/carer will be notified, and they will be required to collect the mobile phone. The student will not be allowed to collect the phone themselves.

On return from suspension, the student will be placed on a monitoring booklet. During this time, they will be required to leave their phone with the Deputy Principal each morning, to be stored securely in the school office. The student will be able to collect the phone at the end of each day from the school office.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FOR THIRD AND SUBSEQUENT BREACHES

In the event that a parent/carer is unable to collect the student's confiscated phone due to extenuating circumstances, the return of the phone will be negotiated with the Deputy Principal.