

POLICY FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT COWELL AREA SCHOOL

Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Electronic Devices

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones and electronic devices among young people requires that the school community takes steps to ensure that such devices are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones and electronic devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that these devices provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2 **Cowell Area School** has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones and electronic devices that provides teachers, students and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of such devices during school hours.
- 1.3 Students, their parents/ carers must read and understand the policy before students are given permission to bring such devices to school.
- 1.4 This policy also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.

2. Rationale

2.1 Personal safety and security

Cowell Area School accepts that parents/carers give their children these devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone or communication device gives parents/carers reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently. ***During lesson time this will occur through the school's front office.***

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones and electronic devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2 The decision to provide such devices to their children should be made by parents/carers.
- 3.3 Parents should be aware if their child takes these devices to school.
- 3.4 Permission to have a mobile phone and electronic device at school while under the school's supervision is dependent on parent/carer permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy. Parents/carers may revoke approval at any time.

4. Acceptable Uses

- 4.1 Student mobile phones and electronic devices are permitted at Cowell Area School.
- 4.2 Students **from and including** Year 7 and upwards should only use their mobile phones and electronic devices before, after school or during recess and lunch breaks for personal reasons. Younger students are only allowed to use their mobile phones for emergency purposes. In some cases, a student or students can negotiate with the teacher to use an electronic device if the use is related to learning.
- 4.3 The above stated devices should be switched off or kept on silent, and kept out of sight during lessons. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/carer specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the **Principal**. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the **Cowell Area School Front Office** remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- 4.4 Mobile phones and electronic devices should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the **class or school**.
- 4.5 Students should protect their personal details by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they give them to. This can help protect the student's details from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- 5.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones and other communication devices must not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as **sports carnivals, excursions or** any extra-curricular activities. Mobile phones and electronic devices must not disrupt classroom lessons in any way.
- 5.2 Using mobile phones or other communication devices to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour may include a student or students engaging in personal attacks, harassing another person, or posting private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using such devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal. **Offended students will be instructed to contact police through their parents/carers.**
- 5.3 Students who use vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using such devices will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.
- 5.4 It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones and/or other devices to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using devices to photograph or film any student without their consent. It is a criminal offence to menace, harass or offend another person using a mobile phone or electronic device and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced. **Police will be contacted if an offence occurs.**
- 5.5 Mobile phones and other devices are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 5.6 Any student/s caught using a mobile phones or electronic devices to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

6. Theft or damage

- 6.1 Students should mark their mobile phones and other devices clearly with their names.
- 6.2 Students who bring such devices to school should leave **it in their bag** when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry these devices are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.3 Mobile phones and electronic devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office.
- 6.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones or electronic devices.
- 6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones or other electronic devices stolen while travelling to and from school.
- 6.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (eg by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords should not be shared.
- 6.7 Lost and stolen mobile phones in Australia can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Sanctions

- 7.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document **will** have their phones or electronic device confiscated by teachers and handed to the front office staff. The mobile phone or electronic device **will** be taken to a secure place within the school.
- 7.2 Depending on the severity of the infringement, students may be able to collect their phone from the front office at the end of the day.
- 7.3 If the infringement is of a serious nature or if there are repeated infringements, parents/carers may be asked to collect the phone. In this instance, it may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the student to bring the device to school for a period of time, or indefinitely. This will be up to the discretion of the leadership staff.
- 7.4 As set out in the unacceptable uses section, failure to follow the rules may also result in an alleged incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

Parent/Guardian Permission

I have read and understand the above information about appropriate use of mobile phones and electronic devices at Cowell Area School. I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to assist in dealing with issues should they arise (eg if lost, or if the device is being used inappropriately).

I give my child permission to carry a mobile phone or electronic device to school and understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the above stated device is used appropriately and correctly while under the school’s supervision, as outlined in this document.

Parent/Carer name _____
Parent/Carer signature _____
Date _____

Student name _____
Mobile phone number _____
Student signature _____
Date _____

Principal name (print) _____
Principal signature _____
Date _____

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact Cowell Area School on (08) 86 292 150.

