



## Mobile Phone and Devices Policy

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### Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed in response to current research surrounding the negative impact of mobile phone use on the motivation of young people. Dr Jean Twenge (2017), a professor of psychology at San Diego State University reports that adolescents who spend more time on media devices such as smartphones, were more likely to report mental health issues, than adolescents who spend more time on non screen activities. Mobile phones can be a distraction to learning, and detrimental to wellbeing, if students don't learn to manage their device.

St Ursula's College recognises that most students own and carry mobile phones or devices. These devices vary in their sophistication and students need to learn how to manage them so they are not used inappropriately, lost or damaged. Whilst the College acknowledges that mobile phones and devices have many benefits and are potentially valuable educational tools, we have concerns for the effects on social interactions and student self esteem and wellbeing.

Based on our research, and consultation with staff and parents, we have developed the following guidelines in order to effectively support student wellbeing and learning.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) *Student Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement* which parents and students sign at the beginning of the school year, along with the Student Behaviour Guidelines outlined in the Student Diary.

### Guidelines

- Phones should be **switched off and kept out of sight** between the hours of 8:45am and 3:00pm unless permission is provided by a member of staff. It is not acceptable to use mobile phones at recess or lunch, nor between lessons. These are valuable opportunities for face-to-face socialising.
- Individual classroom teachers have the right to manage when and how students use mobile phones and other devices in their classrooms for educational purposes.
- Students must behave in an ethical manner when using mobile phones and other devices, as per the *Student Acceptable Use of Technology Agreement*.
- Students are fully responsible for the security of their devices at all times. St

Ursula's College accepts no responsibility for students whose devices are lost, stolen or damaged. This also applies to any organised off-site school events. Parents need to take appropriate measures to insure phones against loss, damage or theft.

- Headphones should only be used in class with the teacher's permission.
- When a student is attending examinations during scheduled examination blocks, mobile phones and other devices, such as smartwatches, which provide an internet connection must not be brought into the exam room.
- Parents/carers are asked not to contact their daughter during the day via mobile phone. Instead they are asked to contact Student Services via phone or email who will relay the message to the student.
- Students should not independently contact parents/carers during the school day, for example if they are feeling unwell. This communication should be directed to appropriate College staff who will make the necessary contact.
- Students should not use mobile phones or devices whilst on camps, retreats, excursions etc without the express permission from the Year Coordinator or supervising teacher
- If a student needs to make a phone call during the day they are to see their Year Coordinator.

### **Mobile Phones on camps and other external activities**

Use of mobile phones during off-campus activities arranged by the College, including field trips, sporting events, physical activity, camps and retreats, will be determined by the teacher or supervisor in charge of that activity. Parents will be informed of this in writing. Arrangements will be in place for communication with a staff member in the case of an emergency and restrictions will be placed on the use of the mobile phones to ensure that their use is not an intrusion into the educational and social objectives of the activity.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF BREACHING THESE GUIDELINES**

Students and parents are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Mobile phones or other mobile devices must not be used to take photos/video of any other student or teacher without their consent. It is also prohibited to upload photos/video of other students/teachers to social media websites or email photos/videos to others.

Phones and other devices are not to be used in toilets or change rooms.

A breach of the above guidelines will have serious consequences such as:

### Low level breaches

- Consequences may include a verbal warning to place the device out of sight in the first instance. Repeated infringements may result in an after school detention, or being asked to place the device on the teacher's desk for the duration of the lesson.
- Confiscation of devices and parent interviews may be required for students who repeatedly fail to heed these guidelines.

### During Exams and Assessment Tasks

- Typically, a student who has a mobile phone or other device on them when attending examinations or in-class assessment will be awarded a zero mark.

### More serious breaches

- Devices may be confiscated or accessed by a Coordinator or member of the Leadership Team where there is a reasonable belief that:
  - There has been a major breach of the College rules or policy
  - There may be a threat of harm to a student or others or system security
  - Child protection guidelines have been breached
- Devices confiscated by the Year Coordinator would be taken to the front office and returned via a parent interview. A parent/carer should always be informed if confiscation of a device occurs.
- Serious breaches (as per the Student Acceptable Use Agreement, Anti-Bullying Policy or the Student Management Policy) may result in actions including the withdrawal of access to services. Unacceptable material may be supplied to the NSW Police at the discretion of the College or Sydney Catholic Schools personnel.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
SCS	Sydney Catholic Schools

## Related Documents

Document Name	Location Path	Relevance
SCS Student Acceptable Use Agreement		SCS policy
SCS Anti-bullying policy		SCS Policy
Student Behaviour Guidelines		College Diary

## Document Control

Version	Summary of Changes	Author	Date
V1	Initial Draft	Laura Gant	28/10/2019