



Macarthur Girls High School

Students' use of Mobile Phones in Schools Management Plan

Rationale and Objectives

Macarthur Girls High School supports the restrictions of mobile phones in accordance with the NSW Department of Education: Students' Use of Mobile Phones in Schools policy <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-management-schools/student-use-of-mobile-phones>. While mobile phones are a part of modern society and the school accepts that many students will possess them, mobile phone use in schools including texting, photographing, filming and accessing social media 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.

Macarthur Girls High School 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 learning support teams.

Off and Away approach

Macarthur Girls High School has elected to use the **OFF AND AWAY** approach. All mobile phones and other non-educational electronic devices including wired and unwired headphones and speakers 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 on entry to the school. Mobile phones should not be held in student pockets and should remain in their bags throughout the school day. Students may access their phones when travelling to and from school outside the school gates. This is an approved NSW Department of Education option and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing approach to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment.

Key features of this approach include:

- Mobiles phones and/or headphones or speakers **MUST be kept in the student school bag, not in pockets of the uniform.**
- **If the phone is seen or heard**, the student will be **given one verbal warning** to put the phone away. If the student fails to follow this direction and/or the device is seen or heard again, the student will be asked to report to the Student Administration Office where their phone will be confiscated for the day and securely stored. The parent/guardian will be notified and informed that if the phone is confiscated again, the phone will only be released to the parent/guardian. The student will be given a pass to collect their phone at the end of the school day.
- **If the phone is seen and heard on more than one occasion**, the student will be asked to report to the Student Administration Office where their phone will be confiscated and stored securely. The parent/guardian will be notified and the phone may only be released to the parent/guardian.

- **Failure to comply** – Any students who fail to follow teacher directions to comply with the Departmental Ban on mobile phones will face disciplinary action, which could include the issuing of a Formal Caution.

Making Payments

Macarthur Girls High School recognises that some students make financial payments via applications on their mobile phones. While the school would prefer students to use cash cards for tap and go purchases, students will be able to continue to make such payments at the finance office and canteen but must comply with the following guidelines.

At the finance office and uniform shop – students must not get their phones out until they are being served and must then immediately turn off their phones and return them to their bags.

At the canteen – Students may take their phone from their bags and place them in their pockets prior to moving to the canteen area. Students must not get their phones out of their pockets until they are in the identified 'phone zone' and are about to be served. Students must immediately turn their phones off and place them in their pockets before moving out of the 'phone zone' and away from the canteen. Phones must be returned to school bags as soon as possible. Any student seen in the playground with their phone may have their phone confiscated.

Any students failing to follow school expectations will be banned from using their phones to make payments and could face disciplinary action.

Exemptions

Medical/wellbeing exemptions

Macarthur Girls High School understands there may be students who have a medical, wellbeing or learning need which will require them to access a mobile phone as defined in this plan. Any student who requires exemption will be contacted by their Deputy Principal and/or a member of the School Wellbeing Team in order to determine where an exemption will be applied for, on behalf of a student, as well as the adjustments to any school-based practices and procedures. Requests for exemptions should be made to Deputy Principals but will require medical certification.

Academic exemptions

In exceptional circumstances, teachers may request Deputy Principals or the Principal to allow an academic exemption for students who may be required to use mobile phone applications to complete mandatory work tasks. In such circumstances, teachers will supervise students to ensure that the devices are used under supervision during a specified class time and that parents are informed.

In some circumstances, a teacher may request that students be able to access their mobile devices on a school excursion. In such circumstances, the excursion permission note would specifically identify the purpose for mobile phone use.

Parents contacting students

Macarthur Girls High School is aware that many parents currently contact their daughters by mobile phone during the school day. As students will not be able to access their phones until after they have left school, it is imperative that parents use other means of contacting their child. The school understands there will always be emergencies when parents need to get in contact with students or vice versa during the school day. In such cases, parents and carers can contact the school via phone (96831866) so that a message can be provided to the student in the most appropriate way. Students will also be able to contact parents or carers if urgent after seeking permission from the Deputy Principal or Principal.

This policy will be implemented at Macarthur Girls High School on Monday 28th August, Week 7 Term 3, 2023.

The policy will be communicated and explained to students via school assemblies, google cohort classrooms and during PRIDE lessons. Posters outlining key points will be placed in all classrooms and key school locations.

The policy will be communicated to the parents and the broader school community via school newsletters, emails, the school app and the school website.

This policy has been developed in line with Department of Education guidelines and has been ratified by the Student Representative Council, staff and School Council Representatives in August, 2023.

 Education

Are you ready for learning?

At Macarthur Girls High School it's
as simple as 1, 2 and 3!

- 1**
Each morning you will be required to switch your mobile phone off when entering the school and put it away in your bag.
- 2**
The mobile phone then needs to stay off and out of sight in your bag throughout the day.
- 3**
After leaving the school, you are able to switch on your mobile phone again.