

Secondary Student Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices

Purpose

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets or laptops that are not part of a separate Bring Your Own Device arrangement. This policy applies while students are at school, or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours. This policy emphasises the rights and responsibilities of all school community members and promotes the responsible use of these devices.

At Blackwood High School, we acknowledge that the presence and use of mobile phones and personal devices features significantly in the lives of our students and families. It is expected that all students take responsibility for the appropriate use of mobile phones and personal devices at school, at all times.

Mobile phone use for secondary school students

Our school recognises that there are legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school. This may include:

- to ensure their safety while travelling
- so that parents/caregivers can contact them outside of school hours.

While at school, all contact with students is to be directed through the Student Wellbeing Centre.

While students are on school grounds, they may use their mobile phones and personal devices during recess and lunch times, as well as before and after school. Mobile phones and personal devices should be switched off, kept secure and out of sight, if brought into the classroom. Students should not use their mobile phones or personal devices at any time during class or supervised study breaks, unless given permission by their supervising teacher.

Special exemption for individual students to have their mobile phones and/or personal devices on and accessible can be sought by contacting the school and outlining the unique circumstances for which the request is being made. This will be judged on a case-by-case basis by members of the school leadership team. The School's decision will be final in this matter.

During specified periods of time, where mobile phone and personal device usage is allowed, any use that interferes with, disrupts or harasses others is not acceptable and is a serious breach of our Culture of Respect.

All students will be made aware of the updated Mobile Phone policy through Care Group and direct communication via email to both the student and their family.

Storage of personal devices

Students that bring mobile phones and/or personal devices to school, do so at their own risk. The school encourages all students to store their mobile phones and/or personal devices in their locker, ensuring that it is secured with an appropriate lock. The school does not accept any responsibility for any loss arising from a failure of a lock provided by the student's family or any failure by the student to use an appropriate lock on their locker.

Should students require, the Student Wellbeing Centre can safely store student devices for the day. Students will be required to provide their Student ID card at both drop off and pick up to verify their identity. Any phone placed with the Student Wellbeing Centre will be secured for the duration of the day. Students will not be able to access their devices during break times.

If the student does not comply

Inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or personal devices during class time will initially be handled by the teacher responsible for the class. All students will have an awareness of this policy through Care Group and email communication. For the purpose of this policy, this awareness is classified as prior knowledge. Therefore, any breach of this policy may result in the immediate confiscation of a student mobile phone or device. At a suitable time, the device will then be handed in to the Student Wellbeing Centre where it is to be collected at the end of the day by the student, a parent or caregiver.

Any student in breach of this policy is expected to immediately hand their phone and/or personal devices to the teacher when requested. If a student refuses to follow the reasonable instruction of the teacher, choosing not to hand over their phone or devices when requested, the teacher may request support from any member of the School Leadership team. If this situation occurs, the student's failure to follow reasonable instructions from the teacher may result in an escalation of the level of consequences for the student's actions.

The use of a mobile phone and/or personal devices to interfere with, disrupt or harass others is not acceptable and is considered a serious breach of the BHS Culture of Respect. This includes, but is not limited to:

- An infringement on the privacy of another person
- Propagation of any form of malicious software
- Harassment and/or bullying of another individual or group
- Collection, possession and/or distribution of material obtained without a person's consent
- Sending/posting of materials or comments deemed to be offensive, hateful, threatening, pornographic, racist or incites violence.

This, along with other inappropriate use of a mobile phone and/or personal devices, may be addressed in conjunction with one or more of the following school policies;

- Responsible Behaviour
- Harassment and Bullying
- Personal Learning and Acceptable Use agreement
- Digital Citizenship

Any breach of policy may result in disciplinary action which includes but is not limited to: confiscation of devices, learning catch-ups or suspension. Where illegal activity is suspected, police involvement may be required.

Internet connection for personal devices

Blackwood High School has a stable school-wide WiFi network that provides students with wireless access to all online learning resources and materials. All students are required to read and sign the Personal Learning and Acceptable Use agreement so that they are aware of their responsibilities in using this school provisioned service. All students are supported to connect their laptop device to this service for secure and stable provisioning of internet access whilst at school. Mobile Phones are not to be connected to the Blackwood High School Wireless network as this can affect the number of available IP addresses on the network and as a result affect the number of devices that can be connected to the school's Wireless network.

Students are not to use personal internet connections (personal hotspots) to access materials whilst in class. Nor should they allow other students to hotspot to their devices. If the Blackwood High School WiFi system is not operating and internet access is required for planned learning experiences, teachers will negotiate alternative learning experiences until such time as the WiFi starts working again.

In certain circumstances, a mobile phone or personal device may expedite the learning process; such as the use of subject-specific applications, advanced camera features or audio/video recording of learning material. In these instances, the teacher will use their professional judgement to decide whether to permit a mobile phone and/or personal device to be used, to improve learning outcomes. The teacher's decision is final. If permission is given, the student must only use their devices for the approved activity, following which it must be switched off, or put on silent, and placed out of sight. If the teacher has reason to believe the student is in breach of the agreed upon usage, the teacher may rescind their permission at any time.

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

Make sure:

- this policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff and families
- there is a process for regular review of the policy
- secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff
- processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.

Enforce the school's policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Consider requests for exemptions from the school policy from parents/caregivers, adult or independent students on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.

Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.

School staff

Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment. Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment.

Respond to instances of non-compliance in line with the school's policy.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or personal devices in line with school/department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Make sure that any student mobile phones and/or personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent).

Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.

Students

Comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff.

If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with this policy, do so in a safe, responsible and respectful way and support peers to do the same.

Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person.

Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.

Ensure that their personal locker is secured with an appropriate padlock to keep personal belongings safe.

Parents/Caregivers

Support the implementation of the school's policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy.

Use the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school). Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience an issue at school.

Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone (or other personal device) in a safe, responsible and respectful way.

Ensure that the student has a lock for their locker.

Communication and review

This policy has been developed in consultation with all staff at Blackwood High School. The policy has been submitted for review by Governing Council, as a representative group of parents/caregivers and the wider community, for input and feedback, with an annual review date to be set from the date of publication.

This policy can be accessed via the Blackwood High School website - <https://www.bhs.sa.edu.au/about-bhs/policies/>

Supporting information

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Responsible Behaviour Policy
- Digital Citizenship Policy
- Personal Learning and Acceptable Use agreement
- Culture of Respect