

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.

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. However, the prevalence of inappropriate device usage during learning is having a significant impact on many student's capacity to focus and actively engage in their learning activities. A growing body of research indicates a strong connection between mobile phone usage and increases in various mental health and wellbeing concerns, both in and out of school. This policy has been developed to minimise disruptions to students' learning and to support their overall mental health and wellbeing whilst at school.

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.

At Blackwood High school, mobile phones and personal devices (such as smart watches) are not to be used during school hours. At the beginning of the school year, every student will be allocated a personal Yondr Pouch for storage of their mobile phones and personal devices during the school day. It is the student's responsibility to bring their Pouch with them to school each day and keep it in good working order.

The Yondr pouch remains the property of the school and is loaned to students for the duration of their enrolment. Students will be invoiced for the replacement cost of their pouch if the pouch is:

- lost
- damaged in a way that affects its functionality
- covered with any imagery or text that is deemed inappropriate for our school environment.

Exemptions: 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 may be allowed, any use that interferes with, disrupts or harasses others, is not acceptable and is a serious breach of our school expectation to be kind and respectful.

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.

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

Parent/Caregiver contact during the school day

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

Storage of personal devices

Students that bring mobile phones and/or personal devices to school, do so at their own risk.

At the start of the day, as students enter the school grounds, they are expected to:

- turn off their phone or put it in Flight mode
- unlock their Yondr pouch using an Unlocking Base, at one of the specified locations around the school
- place their phone in the Pouch and securely close it.

The school requires students to keep their mobile phones and/or personal devices in their Yondr pouches during school hours. We recommend that students store their Yondred devices in their lockers, ensuring that the locker is secured with an appropriate and sturdy lock. The school may not be able to pursue any alleged theft of items from an unsecured locker.

If a lock is damaged or broken, the Student Wellbeing Centre can safely store student devices for a day. Students will be required to provide their Student ID card at both drop off and pick up to verify their identity. It is expected that students will acquire a replacement lock as soon as possible.

At the end of the school day, as students are preparing to leave school grounds, they will:

- Unlock their Yondr pouch using an Unlocking Base at one of the specific locations around the school
- Remove their phone and/or personal devices
- Securely close the pouch and place it in their bag for school the next day.

Any student arriving late to school or leaving early will go through the locking and/or unlocking process in the Student Wellbeing Centre when they sign in/out.

Student accountability guidelines

Any fault and/or damage to the pouch must be reported to the Student Wellbeing Centre for it to be evaluated.

Inadvertent damage

If students leave their Pouch open in their bag/locker it can result in structural damage to the locking pin (bent or broken). Students will be issued with a replacement Pouch and a reminder that they are to ensure that the Pouch is closed after taking their devices out at the end of the day. Inadvertent damage may result in the student being invoiced \$30 for the replacement of the Pouch.

Intentional damage

If a student intentionally damages their Pouch (e.g. ripped, cut, torn, bent/cut pin, signs of force to black button on flap, or other actions that affect the functionality of the locking mechanism), the Pouch and personal devices will be confiscated and a parent/caregiver will be notified. The student will be invoiced \$30 for the replacement of the Pouch and may be issued with a Take Home. A replacement Pouch will be issued to ensure the student can continue to comply with this policy.

Forgotten Pouch

If a student forgets their Pouch, they are required to leave their phone with the Student Wellbeing Centre when they arrive at school. It will be secured for the day in the Wellbeing Centre. The student will return to the SWC at the end of the school day, or prior to their departure, to collect their device. If the student forgets their Pouch multiple times within a term, further consequences may be given in line with this policy.

Manufacturing fault

If the Pouch is found to have a manufacturing fault, the student will immediately be issued with a replacement Pouch to ensure they can continue to comply with this policy.

Circumvention of the intent of this policy

Students that engage in any action or behaviour to circumvent the intent of this policy will be deemed non-compliant. Appropriate consequences will be determined in line with this and any other related policies.

Internet connection for personal devices

Blackwood High School has a 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 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 learning, teachers will negotiate alternative learning experiences until such time as the WiFi starts working again.

Approved use of personal devices

In certain circumstances, a teacher may suggest that a student can use their mobile phone and/or personal device to supplement their learning experiences; such as the use of subject-specific applications, advanced camera features, or audio/video recording of lesson material. In these instances, the teacher will borrow a portable unlocking kit from the Resource Centre. Students are to use their device for educational purposes only, following which it must be switched off or put in Flight Mode and returned to the Yondr pouch upon completion of the exercise, or at the end of the lesson.

During certain events, such as excursions, students may be given permission by the supervising teacher to access and use their personal devices for educational purposes. This is at the discretion of the teacher and no further correspondence will be entered into once the teacher's decision is made.

Inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or personal devices will be addressed in conjunction with the following school policies and agreements:

- Behaviour Support Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Digital Citizenship Policy
- School Expectations Agreement which includes:
 - Harassment and Bullying Agreement
 - Personal Learning and Acceptable Use Agreement
 - Mobile Phones and Personal Devices Agreement

Where illegal activity is suspected, police will be contacted.

Non-compliance and consequences

- If a student intentionally damages their Pouch, they may be issued with a Take Home. A Reconnection meeting will need to occur before the student is allowed to return to school. A replacement Pouch will be issued during the Reconnection meeting and the student will be reminded of the expectations regarding the use and care of the Yondr Pouch.
- If a student repeatedly forgets to bring their pouch, further consequences may apply, such as a Take Home or Suspension.

Wilful non-compliance with the use of a Yondr Pouch:

Step 1: Students will be given the opportunity to put their mobile phone in their Yondr pouch. If the pouch needs to be unlocked, they can do so at the Student Wellbeing Centre, ensuring the pouch is locked once their device is placed inside. A member of the leadership staff may be called in to provide support. The student returns to class.

Step 2: If non-compliance continues, a staff member will escort the student to the Student Wellbeing Centre. A parent/caregiver will be notified and a Take Home will occur. The mobile phone will be stored in the Student Wellbeing Centre until the parent/caregiver comes to collect the student. A Reconnection meeting will need to occur before the student is allowed to return to school.

Step 3: Persistent non-compliance. If a student receives three Take Homes (within a single term) for mobile phone non-compliance, they will be suspended. A Reconnection meeting will need to occur before the student is allowed to return to school.

Monitoring and Support

It is important to build early habits in the implementation of the Yondr Pouch. A successful Yondr implementation maintains a balance between empathy and holding students accountable. At the start of each year, all new students are allocated a pouch and given an induction to the use of their Yondr pouches.

Initial Pouch Check

The morning after all students are issued with their Pouch, school staff will conduct a Pouch check. Staff will specifically check for intentional/inadvertent damage and forgotten Pouches.

Lesson 1 Yondr Requirement

At the start of every day, each student is required to bring their Yondr pouch with phone secured inside, to their first class and make it available for the teacher to conduct a spot check. Students that choose not to bring a phone to school must still bring their pouch to ensure it is in good, working condition. Students can return their pouch to their locker at the start of Recess.

Random Spot Checks

In addition to the initial Pouch check, school leaders will conduct random classroom Pouch checks. Members of the School Leadership team will randomly select classrooms and open and inspect each Pouch for signs of damage. All students will be asked to place any Yondr Pouches on their desk for inspection.

Staff Checks

Teaching staff may conduct random spot checks during their lesson. Students will be asked to place Yondr Pouches on their desk for inspection. Failure to do so will be taken as wilful non-compliance with the use of a Yondr pouch.

Any identified breaches of this policy will be followed up accordingly.

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/caregiver).
- 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 agreements:

- Behaviour Support Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Digital Citizenship Policy
- School Expectations Agreement which includes:
 - Harassment and Bullying Agreement
 - Personal Learning and Acceptable Use Agreement
 - Mobile Phones and Personal Devices Agreement