



# Saint Mary's Catholic College Mobile Device Policy and Practice Guidelines

## Rationale:

Saint Mary's Catholic College recognises that many students and parents feel the need to carry a mobile phone and accepts that there are genuine reasons for their use – for example to contact parents after sport practice, after Homework Club, for bus pickup, a part-time job after school or in emergencies.

However, as a learning community, the use of mobile phones and similar electronic devices can be disruptive to the learning environment and the safety of children therefore we need policies and related rules to govern their use during school hours.

Equally, we are a school that teaches and promotes Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L) PB4L is researched and leads to personal growth and the development of emotional intelligence.

*To promote positive relationships, reduce bullying and create resilience in children removing mobile communication during the school day is required. This action encourages face-to-face communication and allows the subtleties of tone, the importance of active listening and the non-verbal cues in conversation, and conflict, to become established and embedded in our children's ability to communicate, create meaning and understanding.*

This policy acknowledges that smart phones & electronic communication devices can be used for valid educational purposes but provides guidelines for safe and acceptable use. Equally it acknowledges smartphones and other electronic devices can easily be improperly used, lost, stolen or damaged and must therefore be effectively managed.

This policy looks to balance the benefits of mobile phones whilst managing the problems they can potentially cause.

## Problems Identified:

### **Smartphones present to schools, students and their learning the following manageable risks:**

- Disruption to educational programs through the receipt and transmission of messages.
- Disruption to educational programs and learning environments through the engagement of students on social media.
- Privacy concerns related to the ability of many devices to take photographs, record video or audio without the knowledge or consent of those being photographed / recorded.
- Access and interface with inappropriate materials via the internet.
- Potential for cyber bullying via the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices.
- Sharing of inappropriate photographs through social media
- Loss and/or theft of smartphone.
- Potential for breach of copyright.
- Potential for inappropriate use during examinations.

**As such these risks will be minimised by the following practices at Saint Mary's Catholic College:**

- No use during class time other than for educational purposes as prescribed by a classroom teacher.
  - Teachers in the senior school may discuss with the Head of Secondary or Principal and seek approval for limited and purposeful academic use. This will most often be to comply with QCAA assessment requirements or actions. eg the recording of student presentation for assessment or the photography of student practical work for moderation, verification or confirmation.
  - Teachers are not authorised to allow or direct students to use of technological devices for leisurely pursuits. Watching and listening to videos, music or other audio via headphones for leisure during the school day **is not** permitted. Direct, specified and timed academic use will be directed by the teacher and is allowed when academically beneficial.
- Mobile phones will be placed in each student's locked locker on arrival at school. Safe and secure locks are to be provided by each parent/family. Primary students should bring their mobile phone to the office for safekeeping.
- Counsellors, in consultation with the Head of Secondary, Head of Primary or Principal, may direct therapeutic use.
- Mobile Phone technology is used to assist in managing certain conditions. eg diabetes insulin alarms. There will be medical exemptions allowed as prescribed/advised by medical practitioners for health management.
- The taking of photographs, recording video or audio in the College environment without **WRITTEN** consent is absolutely prohibited and may result in suspension or termination of enrolment.
- The accessing of inappropriate online material via internet or associated apps is absolutely prohibited. It does not matter if this material was sourced via the College server or personal data plans. Inappropriate material covers all matter that is not in line with our values as a Catholic school in the Benedictine tradition.
- The transmission of sexual, violent, derogatory or defamatory messages and/or images is absolutely prohibited and in some cases criminal. These cases will be dealt with in accordance to our student behaviour support protocols and, as necessary or mandatory, be referred to police.
- Cyber bullying through text messages, social media sites or any other form of electronic communication will not be tolerated and may result in suspension or termination.

**These will be enforced by the following practices:**

- Parents make contact with their children via Student Services reception on 41600900, as has always been the correct and safest protocol.
- All student illness is managed through Student Services reception on 41600900. Sick bay protocols apply as per College rules, requirements and protocols.
- All requests for early departure goes through Student Services reception on 41600900 as per College rules, requirements and protocols.
- Mobile phones will be placed in each student's locked locker on arrival at school. Safe and secure locks are to be provided by each parent/family. Primary students should bring their mobile phone to the office for safekeeping.
- The mobile phone will remain in the locker for the duration of the school day.
  - **IN PRACTICE THIS MEANS:** Students are not permitted to carry mobile phones during the school day. This includes between lessons and during lunch break times. Checking of phones for messages from parents or work etc may occur briefly at the start of morning tea and lunch breaks in the office.

## **Clarifications:**

1. The College does not accept any responsibility for theft, loss or damage or health effects (potential or actual) resulting from mobile phone use.
2. Parents and students should ensure that phones (and/or electronic devices) are properly and adequately insured as personal property.
3. Parents are responsible for the purchase of adequate locks. One would suggest that a cheap and flimsy lock is not adequate when looking to protect a technology item which may be as expensive as \$1500.
4. Mobile phones must be turned off and locked in the student's locker at the start of the school day.
5. Use of mobile phones during excursions and on camp is to be determined by the classroom teacher / teacher in charge of the excursion or camp, in accordance with the guidelines for safe and acceptable use as outlined in this document.

### **Sanctions for improper use:**

Students engaged in the inappropriate use of mobile phones /electronic devices including but not restricted to bullying or harassing others through SMS, voice or picture will receive immediate consequences, increasing in severity depending on nature of the offence.

Non-observance or breaches of this policy may result in the student's mobile phone being confiscated for the remainder of that school day, kept in a safe place for collection by the student after the final bell. The school will take all due care and consideration but ultimately takes no responsibility for damage to or loss of the mobile phone.

If the student refuses to hand over their phone or is rude / uncooperative towards the teacher confiscating the phone that child's parents will be notified, and further consequences discussed. This will then be viewed as a behavioural misdemeanour and sanctions such as internal withdrawal and/or suspension may be invoked dependant on the level of rudeness and disrespect.

### **1<sup>st</sup> offence in a term**

Phone is removed by the teacher and forwarded to the main office with student's name for safe keeping for the remainder of the day.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> offence in a term**

Phone is removed by the teacher and forwarded to the main office with student's name for safe keeping for the remainder of the day.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> offence in a term**

Phone is confiscated and will not be returned to the student. Parents will be required to make an appointment with the Head of Secondary to retrieve the phone.

**Deliberate disobedience and repeated failure to comply:** Such actions move beyond this policy and are considered to be of a far more serious nature. Deliberate and/or repeated disobedience will result in suspension, on the advice and direction of the Head of Secondary and/or Principal as it would with any other similar matter in the school.

Inappropriate or unacceptable use of mobile phones causing extreme harm or distress to other members of the school community will lead to severe consequences. These may include suspension or recommendation to the Executive Director for termination of enrolment.