



Personal Electronic Device (PED) Policy and Procedure – Effective January 2024

These procedures promote the learning, safety and wellbeing of students and the management of any risk of harm and distraction from the use of digital technology accessed via a mobile phone, smart watch, or other personal electronic device. Thank you to those who completed the 2022 survey, informing us about your wishes for the future of learning.

The Procedures

For the purposes of these procedures, ‘mobile phones and other personal electronic devices’ includes smart watches and all other electronic devices (including iPods and other branded tablets not on our BYOx System), as well as their associated listening accessories – such as, but not limited to, headphones, ear pods and ear buds. These procedures are outlined to manage student use of these devices at Maryborough State High School.

In Queensland public schools secondary school principals, in consultation with their communities, have discretion to make decisions about restricting or permitting student use of digital devices and online services in all school-related settings, including at recess, lunch and during class. Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping the way children and young people learn, communicate, work and play. Learning environments, at school and at home, should support students to develop technological, social, and emotional competencies. This support should maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school.

The aim of this policy is to provide:

- a safe environment to learn without inappropriate mobile phone use or distractions.
- greater opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtimes.

Rationale

While mobile phones and other such devices have significant advantages for use in the broader community their use in schools is highly problematic. In schools, mobile phones are significant distractors to learning and contribute to a student’s cognitive load. They can also pose a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of students through unfiltered/ unsupervised access to the internet and social networking platforms. The use of technology is important, but the risks and benefits need to be managed. A summary of research used to inform this policy can be found at the end of this document.

Use of mobile phones or other personal electronic devices

Students will have their device immediately confiscated by taking the device to Student Services and further disciplinary action may follow if:

- They are using their device in class (excluding laptops or BYOx onboarded devices) or in the playground without staff approval.
- The device is used to bully, intimidate, or otherwise harass other people through any voice call, text message, photographic, video, or other data transfer system available on the device.
- Students use digital devices to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school.
- Students use devices to record images, video, or sound without permission.
- The device has been used to contravene the law.

Student Expectations

- Students may not use mobile phones and other PEDs while on school grounds at any time. 'School grounds' does NOT extend to school excursions, but includes sports carnivals, and other events at the school or off site where an approved school activity takes place, unless otherwise advised.
- Students will place PEDs in the racks/boxes provided by the school, or remain in bags. NOTE – not on their person. PEDs should not be visible in the classroom at any stage and not used without teacher permission.
- Mobile phones are to be **'off and away all day'** from the time students enter school grounds in the morning until they are in the designated bus line area or have left school grounds at the end of the day. This includes before school and at break times.
- Students must switch their smart watch to 'flight mode' for the duration of the school day.
- BYOx or school issued laptops are NOT part of the program.
- Students will move to Student Services immediately if asked by a teacher or member of staff. The PED will then be logged and a receipt provided for the student, who will enter the PED on the Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe. Failure to follow these expectations may incur more severe consequences for persistent failure to follow school procedures and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Students must take full responsibility for any mobile phone or similar device brought to school. The school or staff will not be responsible for their loss, theft, or damage. Students who bring their devices to school, do so at their own risk.
- **Purchasing at the Cafeteria** -Students will be required to use a card/cash to pay for purchases at the Cafeteria. Students and parents are encouraged to use QKR! to pre – order prior to coming to school. Phones are not to be used for purchases.
- We encourage parents to use email as the primary and preferred option for contacting students during the day to minimise phone traffic.

Exceptions/Accommodations

A small number of exceptions/exemptions will be made. These exemptions will only be available for:

- **managing a health condition**

Health related exemptions can be sought by parents/carers by contacting the principal and completing the Mobile Phone Exemption Application (Appendix 3). In the case of a health condition, a letter from a medical *specialist* may be required stating when and how the mobile phone is to be used. The Deputy Principal and Head of Year will work alongside parents and complete the Phone Exemption Plan. For example, the Plan may outline a process by which students check their phones as required in consultation with the Deputy Principal. Families of students in which they require exemption will be referred to the Phone Exemption Flow Chart (Appendix 4).

Parent or Caregiver expectations

In accordance with the procedures parents/carers will:

- Contact the school Front Office to pass on messages rather than contacting a student directly on their device.
- Understand that the school takes no responsibility for loss or damage to phones or personal electronic devices.
- Work collaboratively with the school and help reinforce Maryborough State High School's Use of Personal Electronic Devices Procedures with their student.

Consequences

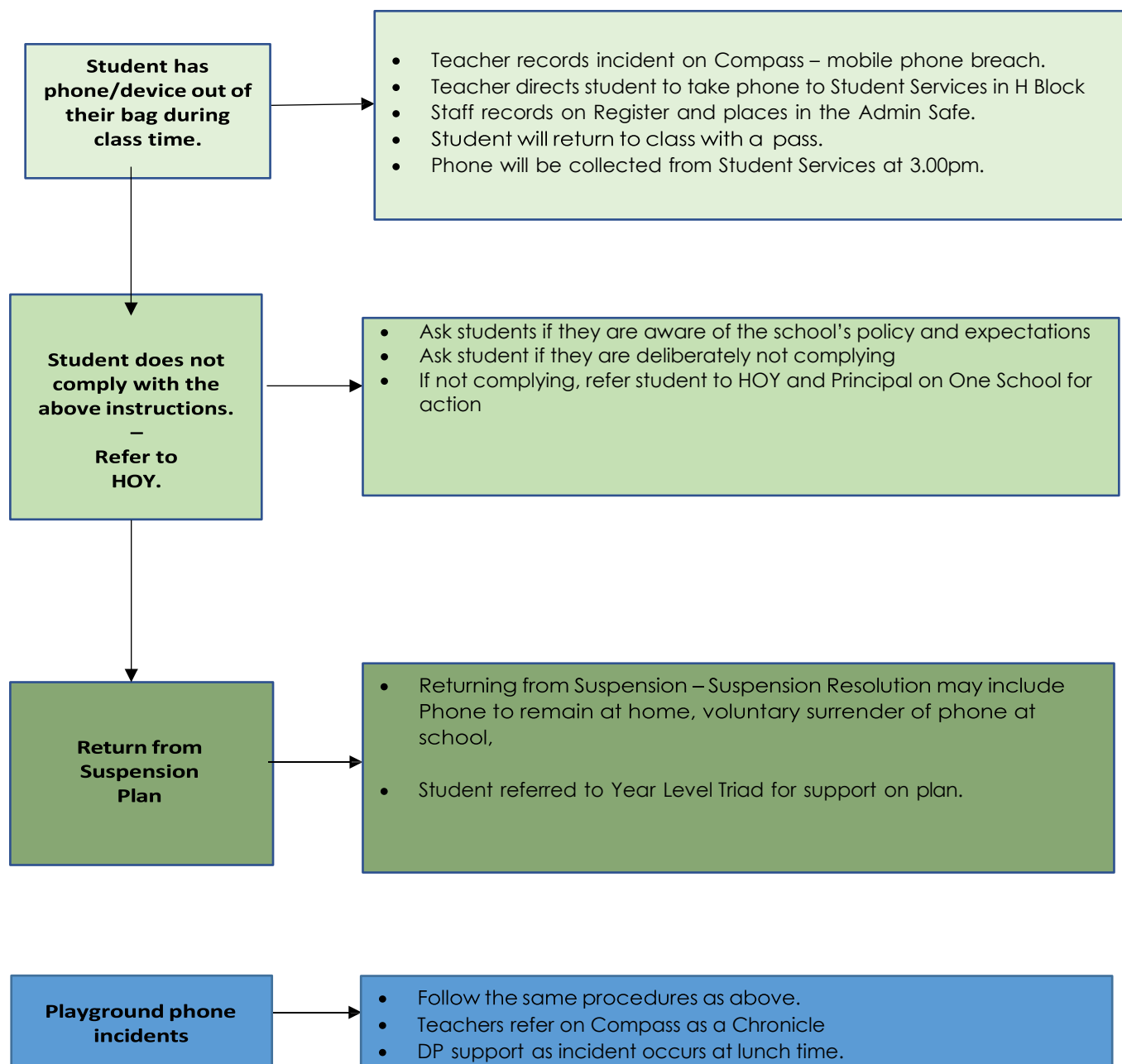
- If requested by a teacher or staff member, students will immediately move to Student Services to surrender their PED. The device will be logged with a staff member who will enter the phone on the Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe. The device will be surrendered until the end of the day.
- Consequences will be applied according to the school's Student Code of Conduct. These include but, are not limited to:
 - Confiscation of the device until the end of the day.
 - Confiscation of the device until such time as their parent or caregiver can attend school to collect the device.
 - Potential Suspension, for persistent failure to follow the procedures of this policy and the School's Student Code of Conduct.

Students who fail to cooperate with the above process will be referred immediately to the Head of Year or Deputy Principal for further action as a failure to follow school procedures. If students are being deceitful in their actions (ie handing in a different phone, etc) an immediate consequence of suspension from school will be imposed.

Students with multiple mobile phone breaches or device misuse entries will be referred to the Deputy Principal and the Year Level Triad. An improvement plan will be formulated, in partnership with parents/carers. This may include consequences, such as an offer to voluntarily surrender the device daily, or a Suspension for persistent failure to meet the procedures of this policy and the School's Student Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1. Maryborough State High School – Mobile Phone Procedures

- **Students may not use mobile phones** and other personal electronic devices while on school grounds at any time. ‘School grounds’ does NOT extend to school excursions, but does include sports carnivals, and other events at the school or off site where an approved school activity takes place, unless otherwise advised.
- **Mobile phones are to be ‘off and away all day,’** from the time students enter school grounds in the morning until they are in the designated bus line area or have left school grounds at 3.00pm. This includes before school and at break times.
- **‘Mobile phones and other personal electronic devices’** include smart watches (permitted on flight mode) and all other electronic devices (including iPods and other branded tablets not on BYOx), as well as their associated listening accessories – such as, but not limited to, headphones, ear pods and ear buds. For further detailed information please refer to the MSHS Mobile Phone policy.



Appendix 2. Research - Mobile phone use in the classroom

There is extensive research emerging on the use of mobile phones by young people. Included below is an edited review of the available literature.

How smart is it to allow students to use mobile phones at school? Reports on a study of mobile phone bans in England. The bans led to:

- Improvements in student achievement
- An increase in test scores for students aged 16 by an amount equal to adding five extra days to the school year.

Lower-achieving students made the greatest improvements. <https://theconversation.com/how-smart-is-it-to-allow-students-to-use-mobile-phones-at-school-40621>

Mobile phones in the classroom: A helpful or harmful hindrance? outlines recent research. Phones can be a distraction and their removal from the classroom can see an improvement in student performance. Students who did not use smartphones in a lecture wrote 62 per cent more information in their notes and recalled more information than peers who were using their phones.

<https://psychopaedia.org/learning-and-development/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a-helpful-or-harmful-hindrance/>

'Schools need to react quickly': Education expert urges smartphone ban discusses smartphone use in schools. According to Finnish expert Dr Sahlberg, smartphone distraction is one of the main reasons why Australia is sliding down Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/schools-need-to-react-quickly-education-expert-urges-smartphone-ban-20180525-p4z4hm4.html>

Research – Cognition and smart phone use

Smartphones and Cognition: A Review of Research Exploring the Links between Mobile Technology Habits and Cognitive Functioning is a review of academic research on mobile phones. The review looked for evidence of effects of smartphone use on cognition. It reported that habitual smartphone use may have a negative and lasting impact on users' ability to:

- think
- remember
- pay attention
- regulate emotion.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5403814/>

The Mere Presence of Your Smartphone Reduces Brain Power, Study Shows The research finds it does not matter whether a smartphone is on or off or lying face up or face down on a desk - having a smartphone within sight or within easy reach reduces a person's ability to focus and perform tasks, because part of their brain is actively working to not pick up or use the phone.

<https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power/>

Research - Smartphones use by children and young people and wellbeing. Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After 2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen Time shows that, on average, teenagers are spending six hours per day:

- using the internet
- texting friends
- using social media.

The surveys explore the links between the use of smartphones, particularly social media, and increases in depression, anxiety, and reduced happiness.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2167702617723376>

Dopamine, Smartphones & You: A battle for your time, a Harvard University blog discusses our desire to connect and seek validation through technologies and how this can lead to anxiety, poor sleep, and unsuccessful social interactions. The blog explains how mobile phone content can influence our 'dopamine pathways and lead to a battle for increasingly of the users' time.
<http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2018/dopamine-smartphones-battle-time/>

The Social Dilemma is a Netflix documentary-drama hybrid that examines the many ways social media and social networking companies have manipulated human psychology to rewire the human brain and what it means for society in general. One of the most striking sections of the documentary is the one that touches on the vulnerability of teenagers who use platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and multiple others every single day and have been moulded by social media's influences. This section of the film is highlighted by statistics on depression, anxiety, and even suicide rates of teenagers that correlate with the rise of social media.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y_KiBxKePI&feature=youtu.be

As always there is a contrary view so please also check out this short ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) RN evaluation https://youtu.be/9y_KiBxK

Appendix 3. Phone Exemption Flow Chart, Application and Plan.

4.1 MOBILE PHONE EXEMPTION – FLOW CHART

Parent contacts Deputy Principal for information on obtaining an exemption to the MSHS mobile phone policy. Discussion occurs around possible eligibility for exemption as per mobile phone policy. Parent is given Mobile Phone Exemption Application.

Parent completes application for phone exemption and gathers any required documentation e.g., medical certificates. Parent contacts Deputy Principal to make appointment to further review eligibility and create a plan around eligibility.

Appointment with Deputy Principal to discuss and complete the Phone Exemption Plan around phone/device use.

Application for Phone Exemption + Exemption Plan for student with a phone exemption + Required documentation to be submitted to Principal for final approval.

Final approval communicated with parents via Deputy Principal. Student issued with a Phone Exemption card and Compass Flag.

Paperwork given to place under Support Tab on One School and YLM to notify class teachers. Paperwork filed in archive room.



4.2 Application for Phone (Personal Devices) Exemption

Name:

Year:

Deputy Principal:

Parent/ Carer:

Parent Carer Contact:

Outline the health / wellbeing Mobile Phone procedure needed for this exemption?

Is medical exemption/information/evidence attached?	YES / NO
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Have you met with the DP to develop an appropriate phone plan? Principal Exemption Approval	Phone Plan attached: YES / NO	Date:
	YES/NO Signature:	

**** Please bring all relevant documentation to the meeting with your child’s DP where a plan will be designed in consultation with all parties.**

OFFICE USE ONLY

- Plan created in One School.
- Phone Exemption Card created and given to DP to deliver to the student and notification to the parent.
- DP notifies parent that exemption is in place. Recorded on One School and Compass.



4.3. Plan for Student with a Phone (Personal Devices) Exemption

Student Name:		Date:
Reason for Exemption:		
Plan made in consultation with:		
Phone Plan: Outline how the phone will be used as recommended by the medical practitioner or similar. How the phone will be accessed in the classroom/playground to ensure appropriate use of the phone. Include:		
When/ Where/ Who		
Student signature:		
Parent signature:		
Principal/delegate's signature:		

*** Phone plan to be reviewed by Principal before final exemption approval is made.