



## **Oberon High School – Mobile Phone Policy**

Oberon High School has chosen to make the school a mobile phone free zone for students during school hours. This decision has been made in the best interest of students and staff to maximise the effectiveness of our precious learning time along with mitigating the social media/communication issues that arise causing distress. In both instances the impact on other students and staff takes away from our core business of teaching and learning.

The move to a phone free day for students is designed to be a positive one that improves learning environments and the overall tone of the school. We hope to see far more positive and extended communication that builds relationships and stronger personal connections. This policy is for everyone and subsequently there is an expectation that every student engages within our four key PBL ideas:

- Respectful – respecting the policy of the school and complying with expectations
- Responsible – being responsible for their own behaviour and complying with expectations
- Resilience – be part of a positive initiative and develop an individual capacity to manage their perceived need for their phone at all times
- Safety – be proactive in engaging in an initiative that has at its heart a goal of ensuring student safety at school

Oberon High School is not banning phones, rather putting a framework around their presence in our school. The framework combines both aspects of teaching/learning and wellbeing as these are the areas impacted. The framework takes into account a range of circumstances that are present in our school on a day to day basis. The procedures that students will need to follow are in the main for our primary timetable and routine. There are some variations to accommodate individual student needs and alternate organisations such as excursions.

The school works with Yondr to provide all the equipment necessary to manage the policy whilst also working within the Digital Device and Online Services policy of the Department of Education (NSW).

### **General Procedure**

#### **School Entry/Start of the Day**

- Students will use the unlocking/locking hub to secure their phone as they enter the school grounds each morning.
- Students who have a phone but have not got their pouch must go to the administration office and have their phone stored safely for the day or secure the phone in a temporary pouch which is to be returned at the end of the day.
- Students who are late to school will need to sign in at the administration office as per usual. At that point they are to use the unlocking/locking hub to secure their phone.

#### **School Exit/End of the Day**

- Students will use the unlocking/locking hub to open their pouch and take out their phone.
- Students who have a phone stored in the administration office may pick it up, whilst students who have borrowed pouches must return the pouch.
- Students who leave school early will follow the procedure outlined above depending on their circumstance.

Students who leave school and then return can unlock their phone as they leave but will be required to relock it once they return.

## **Variations to the General Procedures**

Students who can show that they need access to their phone more readily can negotiate a variation. This will apply to students with specific needs around monitoring health or wellbeing. The variation will be discussed with the Learning and Support Team and ultimately approved by the school senior executive. There must be a compelling reason which is justified by specialist medical advice provided to the school.

There are a number of students who currently have an individual plan that outlines a strategy for de-escalation or self-regulation. This generally outlines a safe place to go and capacity to ring parent/carer or medical professional. These will still be in place and represent little change to the current situation, with unlocking/locking stations available for emergency use under staff supervision around the school.

## **Teacher initiated Learning Requirement**

There is the scope to allow teachers to unlock pouches for a period of time in their learning environment. It is then the teacher's responsibility to ensure that all phones are resecured before students leave that location. This represents little change from now where teachers direct student phone usage in the classroom, however, it removes the temptation of student usage at times when phones are not required.

## **Excursions**

Students will be permitted to carry their phone on an excursion that takes them away from school for a significant period of time. Students who are leaving school to attend an excursion for a short period of time will leave their phone at school with their bag. There are some excursions such as camps where the provider will not allow phones onsite. We will need to abide by these rules as it is generally a requirement of the booking.

## **School Carnivals (Oberon High School)**

Students will commence their day at school and will place their phone in the pouch as usual. Students will carry on through the day at the carnival with their phones locked away in their pouch. Students will be able to unlock their phone as they leave the school later in the day. The school always returns to school on a carnival day prior to dismissing students. There will be a unlocking/locking hub at the carnival location for students to utilise if they are picked up early by a parent/carer.

## **New enrolments/Students Leaving**

New enrolments will be subject to the same requirements as all students. An induction of our mobile phone policy will be carried out during the enrolment process.

Students who are leaving must hand back their Yondr pouch as it is an item owned by the school and is borrowed out much the same as a library book

## **Technology Access**

Our school has provided subsidised access to chromebook technology for a number of years. Chromebooks are available for loan if needed from the library. There is no need for students to utilise other devices for their learning, except in a small number of cases where specialist technology is needed. It is in these cases that the school will provide an appropriate device or the student can negotiate an alternative from home to be used in that class only. These devices are rarely phone based which limits issues arising that will impact this policy directly.

## **Canteen**

A number of our students have been using their phone to pay at the canteen. This will not be possible under this policy, however, they can use a card associated with the same account. If the student hosts their card in their phone cover it will likely read through the pouch once presented to the terminal.

## **Evacuation/Lockdown**

These critical situations require student discipline and compliance around not communicating with the outside world. We have impressed on students during practice sessions that communication at that time will generate worry and likely lead to people coming to the school and then being placed in danger as they will not know what the source of danger is or where it may be at the time. Students may take their pouch with them to the evacuation centre. The school will place an unlocking/locking hub in the portable go-box used for evacuations to allow potential unlocking of devices when it is safe to do so. Lockdowns will see students in classrooms without an unlocking/locking hub which will secure phones. Where students are using a phone with permission at the time of the critical incident the teacher is responsible for ensuring every phone is secure.

## **Snow (or any other reason for the school unexpectedly altering its operational status)**

If the school has to change its operational status leading to students having to contact parents to make alternate arrangements at short notice, they will be allowed to contact parents directly using their phones. Students will be required to comply with staff instructions around this to ensure unlocking of pouches is done in an orderly fashion.

## **Non-compliance**

- Students who are seen with a phone at school will be asked to hand the phone over immediately. The phone will be stored in the administration office for collection at the end of the day. Students will be counselled about their non-compliance and parent/carer contacted.
- Students who are seen with a phone on a second occasion will be asked to hand the phone over immediately. The phone will be stored in the administration office for collection at the end of the day. The student will be counselled about their non-compliance, parent/carer contacted and receive a formal caution of suspension.
- Students who are seen with a phone on a third occasion will be asked to hand the phone over immediately. The phone will be stored in the administration office for collection at the end of the day. The student will be counselled about their non-compliance, parent/carer contacted and the student placed on a suspension.
- Students returning from suspension will be required to engage with the senior executive and Learning and Support Team around their non-compliance and will be required to check in each day upon their return to ensure their phone is secure. The period of check in will be at least 5 schools days (that they are present).
- Students who continue to refuse to comply will move directly to the school discipline processes without the luxury of any warnings. The first suspension sets the level of expectation which the student must agree to at the time to return.
- Students who refuse to hand their phone over will escalate the issue from phone policy non-compliance to general disobedience. Students will be withdrawn from class at that point until the school can discuss the issue directly with parent/carer. The student will then be subject to school discipline procedures for the general disobedience.
- Irrespective of the circumstances students who persist in non-compliance with this policy will potentially have their permission to bring a phone to school revoked.

### **Malfunctioning versus Malicious Damage**

Students who deliberately damage their phone pouch will be subject to the same processes as students who deliberately damage other school property. That will include disciplinary processes and replacement of the pouch at cost.

Pouches that are found to have locking mechanisms that are not operating properly or damaged fabric through general wear and tare will be replaced at no cost to the student.

### **Other Electronic Devices**

Student chromebooks, gaming devices, e-watches, earbuds and any other device are not captured in this policy. The expectation is that students use these devices appropriately or they will be captured under our general behaviour management processes. These devices may at times lead to inappropriate behaviour, however, this is not common place and does not require specific action or changes to school practices at this time. Revision of this will occur if needed. The school, therefore, is not looking at eliminating electronic devices from the school if they do not pose an issue. In the end the responsibility lies with students to use devices appropriately.

### **Replacement of Damaged Phones**

Students who bring a phone to school each day do so at their own discretion and risk. The school is not bound to replace a phone or compensate a student if their phone is damaged or stolen at school or on a school activity. Students stealing property at our school is very rare as is malicious damage of each others property. The most likely scenario is students losing or damaging their own property. In the main this is concentrated around chromebooks which are larger and more vulnerable, however, we do see quite a few phones dropped by their owners leading to cracked screens.

### **Staff and Phone Use**

Staff will have access to their phones throughout the day as is currently the case. Staff are required to have their phones on them at all times in case of emergency situations or critical incidents. Staff also use their phones to mark rolls when working outside the classroom.

Staff are also aware of their responsibilities around being role models for phone use. This is important as we cannot have kids learn unless they have appropriate modelling.

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