

# Appropriate Use of Digital Devices

(Mobile Phones/Smart Watches)

Policy 2023

## Policy

This document outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones for students, parents and community members whilst on our school site. On Thursday 13 December 2018, the NSW government announced that in response to the recommendations made by a review team the use of mobile devices during school hours will be restricted in NSW public primary schools.

## Rationale

The staff at Beresfield Public School recognise that in today's modern world, many students and their families own and regularly use digital devices, for example, mobile phones/smart watches. We also recognise that some parents/carers may desire or need their child to have a mobile phone/smart watch before or after school for various reasons.

Our school's core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. This document outlines the appropriate use of mobile phones/ smart watches for students and parents/community members during school hours.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Mobile phone/smart watch use does not disrupt the teaching and learning environment for any student or teacher;
- Potential risks to student safety and well-being posed by inappropriate use of mobile phones/smart watches can be identified and addressed;
- Students and parents/community members have a clear understanding of school guidelines and personal responsibilities related to the appropriate use of personal digital devices for example, mobile phones/ smart watches; and
- Students and parents/carers are aware of the appropriate channels for communication during the school day.

## Responsibility

- Beresfield Public School discourages students from bringing mobile phones/ smart phones to school. However, where parents feel it is necessary for their child to have a phone/watch in their possession at school, it is the responsibility of the student to abide by the appropriate use guidelines as outlined in this document.
- The decision to provide a mobile phone/ smart watch for their child should be made by parents or carers who should be aware that their child is bringing a mobile phone to school.



- **Permission for students to have a mobile phone/smart watch at school is contingent on parents and students signing the mandatory “Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches at School” agreement.**
- It is the responsibility of students and parents to comply with the guidelines outlined in this document and Department of Education (DoE) policy.
- **The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/smart watches. This relates to phones at school or whilst travelling to or from school.**

## Guidelines for ...

### Students

- Students are advised that if they bring a mobile phone/smart phone onto the school grounds during the school day, they and their parents need to complete the Appropriate Use of Digital Devices (Mobile Phones/ Smart Watch) agreement.
- Mobile phones/smart watches should be switched off as soon as students enter the school grounds. Phones/watches must be kept turned off throughout the school day. At the completion of the school day, students are permitted to use their mobile phone/smart watch once they have left the school grounds.
- All mobile phones/smart watches brought to school should be clearly marked with the child’s name and handed into the front office for return at the end of the school day.
- If students need to contact their parents during the day, the school’s policy is that they do so through the school office.
- Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones/smart watches on school excursions and overnight camps. In instances where students need to contact their parents on such activities, this will be organised by supervising staff.

### Parents and Community Members

- Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, or for any other communication that is necessary throughout the school day (such as changes to pick up routine) the school office remains the vital and appropriate point of contact. Office staff will ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way. Parents should not contact students directly on their devices whilst they are at school. This includes via call enabled watches and BYOD devices.
- Parents/carers are reminded that they are not to share the personal information of students other than their own without the express permission of their parents. This includes photos of students taken on excursions or at school events.
- At all official school functions, during meetings or when assisting in classrooms, mobile phones should be switched off or put on ‘silent’ mode.



### **Unacceptable Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Watches**

Using mobile phones/smart watches in an inappropriate manner is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Inappropriate uses of mobile phones/smart watches include but are not limited to:

- Using/having a mobile phone/smart watch during school hours;
- Using a mobile phone/smart watch in a way that disrupts the learning environment or interferes with the operation of the school;
- Making calls or sending messages with the intent to bully, harass or threaten another person;
- Using mobile phones/smart watches to take photographs of other people without their consent;
- Using obscene, derogatory or socially unacceptable language while using a mobile phone/watch;
- Using mobile phones/smart watch to receive, download and display inappropriate photographs or other material; and
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/smart watch to menace, harass or offend another person. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

### **Sanctions**

In line with our Student Welfare Policy, for students who fail to follow these guidelines, the following sanctions may be applied:

- Temporary confiscation of the mobile phone/smart watch (handed back to the student at the end of the school day or parent contacted to collect the phone/watch).
- Communication with parents/carers regarding mobile phone/smart watch use at school.
- A student's permission to bring a mobile phone/smart phone to school being revoked.

### **Related Technology**

- Related digital device technology such as portable computer games, iPods, iPads, call enabled smart watches and other similar devices are not to be brought to school under any circumstances. The school accepts no responsibility for the security of these items and the procedures applying to the inappropriate use of mobile phones will apply equally to these devices.

### **Exemptions**

- Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Principal. Applications for exemption should only be requested due to exceptional circumstances and applied for through the school office to the Principal – Beresfield Public School.

### **Implementation of this Policy**

The policy will be made clear to all students and their parents seeking or having enrolment at Beresfield Public School.

- Teachers will discuss this policy with students to ensure they have a clear understanding of the guidelines and procedures.
- Parent/carers and the community will be made aware of this policy by receiving a hard copy (sent home with students) and through the newsletter.



### **Ratification and Review**

- This policy was developed and ratified by the Beresfield Public School executive staff in Term 1, 2023.
- It was presented to the school P & C in Term 1, 2023.
- It will be reviewed when deemed necessary by the school Principal and executive.

### **References**

- NSW Department of Education Legal Issues Bulletin- The use of mobile phones, portable computer games, recording devices and cameras in schools and TAFE NSW institutes.
- Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association – Developing an Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones in Your School.
- <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-reports-and-reviews/mobile-devices-in-schools>
- [Digital Citizenship - home](#)

### **Appendix**

‘Appropriate Use of Digital Devices (Mobile Phones/ Smart Watches) at Beresfield Public School Agreement’.





It is mandatory for all students bringing a mobile phone/ smart watch to school to complete this student/parent agreement form and return it to their class teacher.

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Mobile No :** \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT AGREEMENT**

I have read the Beresfield Public School Appropriate Use of Digital Devices (Mobile Phones/Smart Watches) Policy on the school website and agree that:

- When bringing my mobile phone/smart watch to school, I will switch it off as soon as I enter the school grounds. It will be handed into the school office for the entire school day and picked up at 3pm. At the completion of the school day, I am permitted to use my mobile phone/smart watch once I leave the school grounds.
- I understand and will abide by all the guidelines for acceptable use of mobile phones/smart watches at Beresfield Public School.
- I understand the behaviours that constitute unacceptable use of mobile phones/ smart watches and will not engage in these behaviours at any time. I acknowledge that if I break the terms of this agreement my phone/watch will be confiscated, my parents will be contacted and I may be banned from bringing my phone/watch onto school grounds.

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT/CARER AGREEMENT**

I have read the Beresfield Public School Appropriate Use of Digital Devices (Mobile Phones/Smart Watches) Policy on the school website and agree that:

- I/we give permission for my child to carry a mobile phone/smart watch at school.
- I/we have discussed the mobile phone/smart watch guidelines and procedures with my child.
- I/we understand the correct process to follow when it is necessary to contact my child during the school day.
- I/we agree to support school policy with regards to mobile phone/smart watch use and agree to support school decisions and actions regarding devices.

**Parent/Carer Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Carer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

