

Mobile Phone/Device Protocol - 2023

Rationale

This protocol outlines the appropriate use of mobile devices* at Picton Public School. The staff of Picton Public School recognise that many students and their families own a mobile phone and/or smart watch. We also recognise that some parents/carers request that their child/ren bring a mobile device to school for before and after school safety/security reasons. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore, the school strongly discourages students bringing mobile devices to school. The school is prepared to allow mobile devices on the premises but only within the parameters of the protocols as stated below. Staff also acknowledge that they need to use their mobile phones in a professional, responsible manner, as stated below and the Code of Conduct.

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that:

- mobile phone/device 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/devices can be identified and addressed
- students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of school guidelines and personal responsibilities related to the appropriate use of mobile phones/devices.

Responsibility

Picton Public School strongly discourages students from bringing mobile phones/devices to school. However, in the instance where parents feel it is necessary for their child to have a phone in their possession at school, it is the responsibility of the student to abide by the appropriate use guidelines outlined in this document. The decision to provide a mobile phone/device to their children may be made by parents or carers who must also be aware that their child is bringing a mobile phone to school.

- It is the responsibility of all staff, students and parents to comply with the appropriate use of mobile phones/devices guidelines as outlined in this document and Department of Education and Training (DoE) policy.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones/devices. This includes when students are travelling to and from school.

Guidelines for Students

- In general, students should not bring valuable items to school, as they can be easily lost or stolen, which is often distressing for a primary aged child.
- Students remain responsible for all of their personal effects whilst at school. When students enter the school grounds, the school takes no responsibility for mobile phones/devices. Mobile phones/devices are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/devices.

- There are no reasons why a student needs to have a phone in their possession or use a smartwatch (other than for telling the time) during the school day except for certain exceptional circumstances such as a medical condition. This will need to be prearranged through the office/principal.
- Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency the school office remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- Mobile phones should be switched off as soon as students enter the school grounds. Phones must be kept turned off and in student's bags throughout the school day. The "school day" refers to when the student enters school grounds, and until teacher supervision has ceased. This means that students should not use the phones until leaving the school, or in the case of students who catch a bus, until the teacher has ensured that they are safely on the bus.
- Smartwatches should be set to 'aeroplane mode' throughout the school day.
- Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones/devices on school excursions and overnight camps except for exceptional circumstances such as a medical condition. This will need to be prearranged through the office/principal. School staff will not be held responsible for the security of devices should this guideline be breached. In instances where students need to contact parents, this will be organised by supervising staff.

Guidelines for Staff

- During teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings, mobile phones/devices will be put on 'silent' mode.
- Except in urgent or exceptional situations, taking phone calls and texting is not permitted during teaching time, while on playground duty and during meetings.
- Staff may use their mobile phones for the purpose of using Seesaw, taking photos of student work or using educational applications.

Parents and Community Members

- At all official school functions, during meetings or when assisting in classrooms mobile phones should be switched off or put on 'silent'.

Sanctions

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

- A warning in the first instance, and then a Level 1 for the following instance.

Repeated infringements will be directed to an executive staff member and the following actions may be taken.

- Confiscation of the mobile device (handed back to student or parent/carer at the end of the day)
- Communication with parents/carers regarding mobile device use at school
- A student being banned from bringing a mobile device onto the school grounds.

Unacceptable Use of Mobile Phones/Devices

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

- Using a mobile phone/device without consent from a member of staff, whilst on school grounds. "Whilst on school grounds" refers when students are under the supervision of PPS staff. This includes, but is not limited to, excursions, camps, and bus lines (including while outside of school when supervised by a staff member). This may include before and after school hours. Whilst an executive staff member is preferred, any Picton Public School teacher can provide permission to use a mobile phone.
- Making calls or sending messages with the intent to bully, harass or threaten another person

- Using mobile phones /devices to take photographs of other people without their consent. This is also extended to students travelling to and from school.
- Using obscene, derogatory or socially unacceptable language while using a mobile phone/device
- Using mobile phones/devices to receive download and display inappropriate photographs or other material. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Related Technology

- Related technology such as portable computer games, iPods 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/devices will apply.
- Smartwatches are only allowed to be worn at school for the purpose of telling the time.

Exemptions

- Exemptions from these protocols can only be approved by the principal, and only in exceptional circumstances.

Implementation of these Protocols

- Teachers will discuss these protocols with students to ensure they have a clear understanding of the guidelines and procedures.
- The community will be made aware of these protocols through the newsletter, at P&C meetings and the protocols will be posted on the school's website.
- The protocols will be made clear to all students and their parents seeking enrolment at Picton Public School.

Ratification and Review

- These protocols were developed by the Picton Public School staff and community in Term 3 – 2023.
- It will be reviewed when deemed necessary by the school principal and executive.

References

- NSW Department of Education and Training Policies and Procedures
- Camden South Public School Mobile Phone Protocol
- Point Clare Public School Mobile Phone Protocol
- Mount Pritchard East Public School Mobile Phone Protocol

* 'Device' refers to any mobile device that can send and receive phone calls and /or messages. This includes, but is not limited to phones and smartwatches or fitness trackers (such as the apple watch or fitbit).