

## Phones away for the Day

All Queensland state school students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours. Notifications on wearable devices, such as smartwatches, must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

The decision to implement a consistent, statewide approach to putting mobile phones away during the school day is based on the advice of Ms Cheryl Vardon AO, former Queensland Family and Children's Commissioner, who completed an independent review of Queensland's approach to mobile phones. Ms Vardon's review included consultation with key education stakeholders, such as principals, school staff, students and families from each education region, as well as a review of recent research on student use of mobile phones and personal devices in schools.

'Away for the day' supports schools to maintain a strong focus on student educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement by:

- providing optimal learning and teaching environments
- encouraging increased face-to-face social interactions between students
- promoting the health and wellbeing of students through increased social interaction and physical activity
- reducing the potential for students to be exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world, resulting from unsafe or inappropriate technology use.

## PARENT FAQs

### Mobile phones and wearable devices

To assist schools in their communication with parents and carers around the implementation of 'away for the day' procedure, the following frequently asked questions and their answers can be adapted to suit a school's local implementation approach.

### When does 'away for the day' begin?

From Term 1 2024, all state school students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours.

Wearable devices, such as smartwatches, can be worn however notifications must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

### Why are students being asked to put their phone away for the day?

This approach is being implemented in all Queensland state schools to help:

- reduce distractions in the classroom
- increase face-to-face interactions between students
- promote student health and wellbeing
- reduce the potential for student exposure to negative impacts of the digital world, such as cyberbullying.



## Can my child take their phone with them when travelling to and from school?

Yes, students are allowed to bring their mobile phone or wearable device to school. Students will be able to use their phone outside of school hours to support safe travel, and to make contact with parents, friends and part-time employers.

## Can my child still bring wearable devices to school?

Wearable devices such as smart watches can be worn, however notifications must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

## My child's phone does not connect to the internet, will they be allowed to use their phone?

No. Any phone that has the ability to connect to telecommunication networks or the internet must be switched off and away for the day.

## My child uses their phone / wearable device to manage and monitor a health condition. Can they still use it?

Yes, exemptions will be made available for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device for health monitoring purposes.

Please speak with the school principal regarding processes for requesting an exemption.

## My child uses their phone / wearable device as an adjustment to access and participate in the curriculum. Can they still use it?

Yes, exemptions will be made available for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device for learning, medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons.

This may include scenarios where:

- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed reasonable adjustment for a student with disability or learning difficulties
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used by the student as an augmentative or alternative communication system or as an aide to access and participate in the environment e.g. navigation or object/people identification applications
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed adjustment for a student with English as an additional language or dialect
- students in Years 11 and 12 are applying for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) for assistive technology.

Please speak with the school principal regarding processes for requesting an exemption.

## My child forgot their lunch, how will I contact them?

You can continue to contact your child through existing school processes, such as phoning the school office.

## How will I contact my child at school in the event of an emergency?

In the event of an emergency, you will still be able to contact your child through existing school processes, such as phoning the school office.

## How will my child contact me while they are at school?

If your child becomes unwell or experiences an issue during the school day, it is important that they report to a staff member in the first instance. Staff will follow appropriate school processes and make contact with parents and carers.

In the event of an emergency at school, the school will follow their Emergency Response Plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff, which includes processes for communicating with parents and carers.

## Can my child use their phone while they are on excursions?

Mobile phones and wearable devices are not to be used during school activities such as representative sport, camps and excursions, unless an exception is made by the principal.

If this is the case, information will be included in the excursion permission form.

## Where will my child store their phone during the day?

Mobile phones are to be switched off as the student enters the school grounds. Mobile phones, or other electronic devices, equipped with camera functions are not to have that function accessed at ANY time whilst on school grounds.

All electronic devices, including but not limited to mobile phones, iPad, tablets, cameras are to be signed into the office at 8.30am and stored by office staff in the secured storeroom. Electronic devices can be collected only by the student or parent at 2.50pm, or on departure from the school in the case of early departure.

## Who is responsible for my child's phone during the day?

If your child chooses to bring a phone to school, they will be responsible for the mobile phone during the school day.

## Student and Parent Responsibilities

### Students Responsibilities:

- Mobile phones are brought to school at entirely the owner's risk. The school will not be involved in disputes and/or investigations over damage, loss or theft.
- Phones/electronic devices must be handed in at the office at the beginning of the school day.
- Due to privacy considerations, phone or watch cameras or audio/ visual recording devices cannot be used whilst at school.
- Phones are not to be taken on excursions or camps.
- Students breaching the policy will be subject to the student behaviour management consequences as documented in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Should the rules be breached, the student will be instructed to pass the phone to the office for the rest of the day.
- If procedures continue to not be followed, the phone will be confiscated from the student and the parent will be asked to collect the phone from the office.

### Parent responsibilities:

- Reinforce that phones are to be kept at the office and turned off at all times, whilst on school premises.
- Parents are to contact students during the school day, through the office, not by mobile.