The Bidgee School

Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure

Purpose

Our school acknowledges the educational value of digital devices and online services in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes and student wellbeing. We also recognise they may cause harm if used inappropriately and that we need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible, and respectful ways.

Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents and carers. It also provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing.

This procedure covers student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This procedure covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services.

Our School's Approach

All mobile phones and personal digital devices will be **stored in the office** for the full school day, including recess and lunch. This will mean that students will have a responsibility to turn off their phone, and handover the phone to staff as they arrive on site. Mobile phones will be stored securely in the office for the course of the school day. This is an approved NSW Department of Education option and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing approach to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment.

Evidence indicates that the use of smartphones and related mobile technologies may have a negative impact on students' ability to think, maintain attention, recall information, and self-regulate. For this reason, future changes in The Bidgee School setting may be considered to support the mental health of our students. See the article: *Smartphones and Cognition: A Review of Research Exploring the Links Between Technology Habits and Cognitive Functioning,* for further information. *https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5403814/*

The use of mobile phones and related mobile technologies by **primary and high school students** on school grounds, during class, at recess and at lunch is **not permitted** as per Department of Education Guidelines. The exceptions are as follows: their use is approved by a teacher or principal for an educational purpose; or an exemption applies (see below).

Exemptions

Exemptions apply if a student requires a digital device or online service for medical reasons or for reasonable adjustments made as part of their individual education plan. Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances. Parents and carers can request an exemption, and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion.

Consequences for inappropriate use

Inappropriate use includes the following:

- Using devices to record images, video, or sound (unless under explicit teacher instruction). Filming or recording without permission is an offence.
- Using devices for accessing, downloading, or sending inappropriate, offensive, or prohibited material.
- Not using devices in accordance with the Bidgee School procedures (i.e., having phones out in the playground, classroom or on excursions – during the school day)

If phones or digital devices are not used appropriately or students do not comply with The Bidgee School procedure, the consequences will be individually negotiated based on the seriousness of the incident. The following actions may be taken:

- Student to leave phone/device at home
- Reports made to relevant authorities and support services

Contact between students and parents and carers during the school day

Should a student need to make a call during the school day, they must:

- approach the administration office and ask for permission to use the school's phone; or
- ask a staff member to call on their behalf if it is an appropriate request.

During school hours, parents and carers are expected to only contact their children via the school office.

Responsibilities and obligations

For students

- Be safe, responsible, and respectful users of digital devices and online services and support their peers to be the same.
- Respect and follow school rules and procedures and the decisions made by staff, knowing that other schools may have different arrangements.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students.

For parents and carers

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Support implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home such as use of online services with age and content restrictions.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively as outlined in the 2018 School Community Charter.
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom.

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For the principal, teachers and SLSOs

- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services. This includes:
    - Establishing agreed classroom expectations for using digital devices and online services, in line with this procedure and departmental policy.
    - Identifying strategies to ensure that all students can engage in classroom activities
    - Reading and abiding by the Terms of Service for any online services they use in teaching, including those limiting use by age.
    - Educating students about online privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy, and other online safety related issues.
- Model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy. e.g., phones to be used for professional purposes while in the classroom or on duty
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory requirements. This includes:
    - Reporting the creation, possession, or distribution of indecent or offensive material to the Incident Support and Report hotline as required by the Incident Notification and Response Policy and Procedures and consider any mandatory reporting requirements.
    - Working with the department and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (if necessary) to resolve cases of serious online bullying and image-based abuse.
- If feasible and particularly as issues emerge, support parents and carers to understand strategies that promote their children's safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital devices and online services.
- Participate in professional development related to appropriate use of digital devices and online services.

For non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors

- Be aware of the department's policy, this procedure and act in line with the conduct described.
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with.

Communicating this procedure to the school community

- Students will be informed about this procedure through their teachers in class and at assemblies.
- Parents and carers will be advised via the school newsletter and School Stream. This procedure can be accessed as a hardcopy at the school's administration office.

Complaints
If a student, parent or carer has a complaint under this procedure, they should first follow our school's complaint process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the department's guide for students/ parents/ carers about making a complaint about our schools.

Review

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually.

A copy of this procedure will be uploaded to Teams>Bidgee Staff>General>Procedures

Implemented October 2022

Updated in line with the policy "Student use of Mobile Phones in School" Term 4 2023 (see below)

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Audience and applicability

This policy applies to all students in NSW public schools.

1. Policy statement

1.1 Students are not allowed to use mobile phones at school, including during recess and lunch.

1.2 Principals will manage individual requests from parents and/or carers, and students, for any exemptions to the policy.

1.3 Principals may allow students to use mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as for an educational purpose, to achieve student health and wellbeing outcomes, or as part of reasonable adjustment to enable students with specific needs to participate in education on the same basis as other students.

2. Context

2.1 Learning environments 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.

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https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-management-schools/student-use-of-mobile-phones

https://resources.education.nsw.gov.au/detail/MPM-04

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Appendix 1: Key terms

Bring your own device is an optional program where parents and carers can provide personal digital devices for use at school. Any decision to adopt a bring your own device program is made by the principal in consultation with a school community. All digital devices used in schools are covered by the *Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services* policy. Schools retain discretion to determine the specifications of personal devices to be used at school.

Digital citizenship refers to the skills and knowledge a person needs to effectively use digital technologies in a positive way so they can participate in society, communicate with others, and create and consume digital content.

Digital devices are electronic devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services. They include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones and other devices.

Digital literacy is the set of social, emotional and technological skills and competencies that people need to understand to use digital devices and online services, and to expand their opportunities for education, employment and social participation, including entertainment.

Educational purpose is any use approved by school staff that supports student learning, wellbeing and educational outcomes.

General capabilities are the broad collection of knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions described within the Australian curriculum and NSW syllabus.

Image-based abuse occurs when intimate, nude or sexual images are distributed, or threatened to be distributed, without the consent of those pictured. This includes real, altered and drawn pictures and videos. This is a crime in NSW.

Online bullying involves using technology such as the internet or mobile devices to bully someone. Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Online safety is the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital media, devices, other technology and online services.

Online services are any software, website or application that can gather, process or communicate information. This includes digital classrooms, chat and messaging, online games, virtual reality, social media and other online spaces.

Reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where: there is discussion about school taking place outside of school hours; a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises; a relationship between parties commenced at school; students are online in digital classrooms; and where online contact has flow on consequences at school and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

School staff refers to school personnel who have some level of responsibility for implementing policy and the school digital devices and online service procedure. This includes principals, senior staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, school administrative staff, volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools.

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Appendix 2: What is safe, responsible and respectful student behaviour?

Students are to read and discuss with their teachers. Students to tick they understand **each point** before signing on the back of this page.

Be SAFE

☐ Protect your personal information, including your name, address, school, email address, telephone number, pictures of you and other personal details.

☐ Only use your own usernames and passwords, and never share them with others.

☐ Ask a teacher or other responsible adult for help if anyone online asks for your personal information, wants to meet you or offers you money or gifts.

☐ Let a teacher or other responsible adult know immediately if you find anything online that is suspicious, harmful, in appropriate or makes you uncomfortable.

☐ Never hack, disable or bypass any hardware or software security, including any virus protection, spam and filter settings.

Be RESPONSIBLE

☐ Follow all school rules and instructions from school staff, including when using digital devices and online services.

☐ Take care with the digital devices you use.
   o **Make sure the mobile devices you bring to school are fully charged each day and are turned off and handed to staff to store in the office securely as soon as you arrive on school site.**
   o Understand that you and your parents and carers are responsible for any repairs or IT support your personal devices might need.
   o Make sure the devices you bring to school have the latest software installed.
   o Take care with the school-owned devices you share with others, so that other people can use them after you.

☐ Use online services in responsible and age-appropriate ways.
   o Only use online services in the ways agreed to with your teacher.
   o Only access appropriate content and websites, including when using the school's filtered network and personal, unfiltered networks.
   o Do not use online services to buy or sell things online, to gamble or to do anything that breaks the law.

☐ Understand that everything done on the school's network is monitored and can be used in investigations, court proceedings or for other legal reasons.

Be RESPECTFUL

☐ Respect and protect the privacy, safety and wellbeing of others.

☐ Do not share anyone else's personal information.

☐ Do not touch or use other people's devices without permission

☐ Get permission before you take a photo or video of someone, including from the person and from a teacher.

☐ Do not harass or bully other students, school staff or anyone, this includes cyberbullying using a digital device or online service.

☐ Do not send or share messages or content that could cause harm, including things that might be:
   o inappropriate, offensive or abusive;
   o upsetting or embarrassing to another person or group;
   o considered bullying;
   o private or confidential; and/or
   o a virus or other harmful software.

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I have read/discussed the above points with a staff member and agree to be safe, responsible, and respectful with my use of digital devices and online services while I am enrolled as a student at The Bidgee School.

Signed: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____