



Off and Away - Gate to Gate Policy for the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices UPDATED February 2024

This policy covers student use of mobile phones & other electronic devices (personal or school provided) and online services in school-related settings, specifically 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.

Definitions

A mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system with or without a physical connection to a network. For the purpose of this policy, “mobile phone” refers to mobile phones and any device that may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone such as smart watches.

“Other electronic devices” refers to any personal portable device including iPads, tablet computers, MP3 players, iPods, cameras, gaming consoles.

Rationale

Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping the way children and young people learn, communicate, work and play. Learning environments, at school and at home, 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.

Student use of digital devices and online services in schools is intended to enhance learning, wellbeing and educational attainment. Digital devices and online services can help students develop the skills needed for digital literacy, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relationships and collaboration.

Policy

Ramsgate Public School acknowledges that students may need to be in possession of a mobile phone at school for reasons relating to their safety in travelling to and from school.

At Ramsgate Primary School:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones, including Smartwatches, to school must have them switched off and stored in their bags before they enter school grounds. Hence the “Off and Away” policy approach.
- Student mobile phones, including Smartwatches, will remain switched off and away until the student leaves the school grounds in the afternoon
- Students may not use mobile phones, including Smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices while on school grounds at any time. ‘School grounds’ extends to school excursions, sports carnivals, school camps, PSSA, and other events at the school or off site where an approved school activity takes place
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers should deliver a message to their child by calling the school’s office on 9529 7267

A reminder that we are transitioning to School Bytes for all communications. Important information including permission notes, payments, newsletters and special events are now being sent to parent emails as well as the School Bytes app.

If you are having trouble with School Bytes, or have a question about how it works, please don’t hesitate to contact the office and one of our friendly admin staff will assist.

- The use of mobile phones & other devices by primary school students must be restricted during class, at recess and at lunch, unless approved by a teacher or principal for an educational purpose, where use forms part of a reasonable adjustment for student learning and wellbeing, or where an exemption has been granted for other reasons.
- Taking photographs or videos while at school or engaged in school-related activities by students may only occur if there is a sound reason for the photography or activity. Depending on the particular circumstances and purpose of the photography, the permission of staff, parent/carer or students may be required.

Student Responsibilities

- Phones and other electronic devices (including smartwatches) must be switched off and away at all times whilst at school
- No electronic devices are to be taken on excursions with the exception of cameras and only with the permission of supervising teachers
- Phones must not be used to photograph, record, or video at school or on school excursions or activities, unless approved by a teacher
- The student and their family must take full responsibility for their own device. The school will not be responsible for any loss, theft or damage. Students who bring them do so at their own risk
- It is recommended that children do not inform others that they are carrying valuables in their bags
- Students will use their mobile phone/electronic device in a way which reflects the core values being taught in schools, including the values of respect, responsibility, care and fairness
- Students must not use mobile phones or other devices to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school. Such activities may incur disciplinary action including suspension

Improper use of mobile phones or other electronic devices may result in:

Consequences will be applied according to the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy. These can include:

- Loss of privilege to bring the phone/device to school for a period of time or indefinitely if there is a recurring breach
- The student being required to hand in their device at the beginning of the school day for collection when the student goes home
- Confiscation of the device until such time as their parent or caregiver is able to attend school to collect the device
- Other disciplinary action in cases where students have bullied, threatened or harassed other students or staff via the device or where the device has been used to take photographs or display inappropriate material

Emergency Contact

If a parent or caregiver needs to contact a student at school as a result of an emergency, they are required to call the school's main office and a message will be sent immediately to the student.

If a student needs to make emergency contact with anyone they can do so through the school's main office.

Review Cycle

This policy was last updated in February 2024.