



**“Away for the Day”
Mobile Phone and
Electronic Device
Policy
2024 – 2027**



West End State School has established the following policy that covers mobile phones and wearable devices, encompassing smartwatches, handheld devices, and other emerging technologies with telecommunication and internet capabilities. Excluded from this policy are personal or school-owned iPads, tablets, and laptops approved for educational use under the school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

Document History	Date	Reviewed by	Due for Review
Version 1.0	February 2024	WESS School Leadership Team and School Council	2027



“Away for the day” mobile phone and electronic device policy

AT A GLANCE

In practice:

- Before entering the school grounds (**8:15am**), mobile phones and electronic devices must be **switched off** and **put away, out of sight**. They can be turned back on once the student has left the school grounds (**3:15pm**). This policy also applies during school activities, including representative school sports, excursions, and camps. Students are expected not to linger on school premises before or after regular school hours, except when they are participating in Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) or activities officially sanctioned by the school.
- Smart watches must have **notifications switched off** by placing them on **“aeroplane or school mode”**
- Earphones are to be **away and out of sight**.
- The use of cameras on any device is strictly prohibited on school premises or during excursions unless prior permission has been granted by school staff.
- Students granted an approved exemption will receive an exemption card.
- Mobile phones and wearable devices are prohibited from use on school property, including making phone calls, sending or receiving text messages, playing music or videos, receiving notifications, capturing video or still photographs, or attempting to "hotspot" to bypass the school's network. These devices must be switched off and kept out of sight at all times.
- **Security of a personal device.** Students are responsible for the safe keeping of personal items including mobile phones and wearable devices.

Where a student does not follow this school policy:

- Where the student is unable to produce an exemption card, a mobile phone or electronic device that is not ‘away’ will be asked to hand in their device and parents are contacted to collect it from the office.
- Parents may be requested to keep their child's mobile phone or wearable device at home for an extended period if there is a consistent breach of this policy.

Persistent breach of the “Away for the day” policy may result in a more serious consequence in accordance with the school’s Student Code of Conduct, this may include a disciplinary absence.

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Purpose

This document:

- outlines the requirement for all Queensland state school students to keep mobile phones switched off and **'away for the day'** during school hours, and while attending school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps.
- outlines the requirement for all students to switch off notifications on wearable devices, including smartwatches, during school hours, and while attending school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps.
- provides guidance for schools in managing student mobile phones and wearable devices that are brought to school and,
- provides guidance on the application of exemptions for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device during school hours.

Overview

Queensland state schools are committed to reducing the distraction of mobile phones and wearable devices to provide optimal learning environments for all students.

'Away for the day' aims to:

- Ensure optimal learning and teaching environments by minimising distractions from personal use of mobile phones and wearable devices.
- Support schools in fostering safe and supportive learning environments that prioritise student engagement and wellbeing.
- Foster increased face-to-face social interactions among students.
- Mitigate exposure to negative impacts of the digital world by preventing unsafe or inappropriate use of technology, including cyberbullying, accessing or distributing harmful content, and breaches of personal privacy.

Student use of mobile phones and wearable devices at school

All 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 (on aeroplane or school mode) so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.
- This document also applies to student attendance at school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps, unless otherwise determined by the school principal.
- Students may receive an approved exemption based on medical, disability, and/or wellbeing reasons.

Bringing mobile phones and wearable devices to school

Students are permitted to bring mobile phones and wearable devices to school to:

- support safe travel **to and from school**.
- make contact with parents, friends outside the school grounds.

Storage and loss or damage to mobile phones or devices

- The school makes no provision for the storage of student mobile phones or other personal devices, except for the safe keeping of devices confiscated for a breach of this policy under the school's Student Code of Conduct and in compliance with the [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#).
- Students bear the responsibility for the security and safety of their personal devices brought to school.
- In any circumstance, the school is not responsible for the replacement of, or compensation to, the student or parent for any loss or damage to a device the student brings to school.

Exemptions

The Department of Education consulted with key stakeholder groups to develop a list of exemptions for instances where students may require access to, and use of a mobile phone or wearable device during the school day.

- Parents or carers may apply on behalf of the student for an exemption to the “**Away for the day**” policy and the student must only use their mobile phone or wearable device for the intended, Principal approved purpose.
- Principals will consider requests for exemption received from students or parents on a case-by-case basis. When considering an exemption request, the principal may seek additional information to support the need for the student to access their mobile phone or wearable device during the school day.
- Exemptions may be temporary for a fixed period or for a student's on-going individual circumstances. Consideration of individual circumstances will be given, including where:
 - ✦ the mobile phone or wearable device is used by the student to monitor or manage a medical condition (in accordance with the [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#)).
 - ✦ the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed reasonable adjustment for a student with disability or learning difficulties.
 - ✦ Exemptions issued will be documented in the student's OneSchool Support Provisions tab and communicated to school staff, including temporary relief staff, including details of how and when a student may access their mobile phone or wearable device.
 - ✦ Principals will undertake an assessment of the human rights that may be impacted by the decision and consider whether the limit placed on those human rights is reasonable and justified. The assessment should be documented appropriately.
 - ✦ Where an exemption is not approved and the student or their parent expresses dissatisfaction with the decision, information about how to make a customer complaint and how a complaint will be managed should be made available in accordance with the [Customer complaints management procedure](#).

Students are NOT permitted to, and there will be **NO exemption** granted to allow students to:

- connect their mobile phone to the school's network at any time, that avoids safe and filtered access to the internet (in accordance with the [Use of ICT systems procedure](#)), and
- use their device to “hot spot” their school provided or BYO device.

Maintaining the “Away for a day” policy

A whole-school approach consistent with the school’s Student Code of Conduct where this policy:

- **promotes the safe, respectful and positive use** of mobile phones and other technology through delivery of the Australian Curriculum and specific programs focused on digital literacy.
- **when managing inappropriate online behaviours or reputation management incidents**, the primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of the students and/or staff members involved. Further guidance on responding to online incidents can be found in the [Online incident management guidelines for school leaders](#) and [How to manage online incidents that impact your school](#) flowchart. These guidelines are followed.
- **where consequences** for breach of this policy are outlined in the school’s Student Code of Conduct.
- **where temporary removal of mobile phones and wearable devices** from the student requires they are stored and retained in accordance with the department’s [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#).
- **interruption free time.** The purpose of this policy is to limit actual and potential interruption to students’ schooling. Parents are reminded of how important it is to work together and coordinate:
- **to ensure the intent of this policy** as described in the overview to this policy
- **in cases of emergency** contact with their child (defined as a crisis, predicament, urgent situation), is **via the school’s Administration Office/Student Services** office as the appropriate means of contact
- **they should not interrupt the school day with unnecessary or non-emergent contacts.** Matters of daily routine or messaging that can reasonably wait until the end of the school day should be left to that time of day.
- **If a student becomes ill at school, or any other situation** where a student contacts a parent or carer expressing a **need to leave school**, the Administration Office/Student Services remains the only point of contact.
- This ensures the student is reached quickly, without potential for confusion, and is assisted in the appropriate way and
- Their attendance in school is accounted for. The school needs to know where students are and that the appropriate care is provided.

It is unacceptable for WESS students while at school to:

- use a mobile device in an unlawful manner
- download, distribute or publish offensive messages or pictures
- use obscene, inflammatory, racist, discriminatory or derogatory language
- use language and/or threats of violence that may amount to bullying and/or harassment, or stalking
- insult, harass or attack others or use obscene or abusive language
- deliberately waste printing and internet resources
- damage computers, printers or network equipment
- commit plagiarism or violate copyright laws
- ignore teacher directions regarding the use of social media, online email and internet chat
- send chain letters or spam email (junk mail)
- share their own or others’ personal information and/or images which could result in risk to themselves or another person’s safety
- knowingly download viruses or any other programs capable of breaching the department's network security
- invade someone's privacy by recording personal conversations or daily activities and/or the further distribution (e.g. forwarding, texting, uploading, Bluetooth use etc.) of such material

Students should note that the recording or dissemination of images that are considered indecent (such as nudity or sexual acts involving children) are against the law and if detected by the school will result in a referral to Queensland Police Service.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- [Student Code of Conduct](#)

Resources to find further information

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act Qld \(2019\)](#)

Other Resources

- [Customer complaints management procedure](#)
- [Cybersafety and reputation management](#)
- [Inclusive education policy](#)
- [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#)
- [Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure](#)
- [Student discipline procedure](#)
- [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#)
- [Use of ICT systems procedure](#)
- [Use of mobile devices procedure](#)

Policy review

The WESS "Away for the Day" Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy will be reviewed every four years to align with the Queensland Department of Education's Mobile Phone and Electronic Device Policy, or when Queensland Department of Education amends relevant policy.

Principal:

Tony Maksoud

Signature:



Date: 05/03/2024

School Council Chair:

Katrina Anthony

Signature:



Date: 05/03/2024