



Student Mobile Phones in Schools Policy

(Effective 3rd February 2020 DoE Director General)

For the purposes of this policy, 'mobile phones' includes smart watches and devices, and associated listening accessories, such as, but not limited to, headphones and ear pods.

Rationale

The Department of Education does not permit student use of mobile phones in public schools unless for medical or teacher directed educational purposes.

It is acknowledged that when used effectively as a tool to enhance learning, mobile phones can play an important role in education. A ban on their use, however, when not in direct support of education, will ensure that West Coast SESC can provide a safe and productive learning environment for students in their care. The decision to ban the use of mobile phones in schools is intended to remove the potential learning distraction for students, protect the privacy of staff and students, improve social connections at school and improve the health and wellbeing of students. While it is recognised that cyber-bullying mainly occurs outside school time, banning the use of mobile phones will allow students to better engage with their learning and with their peers, without the pressure felt when needing to respond to a mobile phone. West Coast SESC are, and will continue to be, committed to the education of students, staff and their school community in the responsible and acceptable use of mobile phones. There is no requirement for students to have a mobile phone at school. However, for security and safety purposes to and from school, some parents/carers have supplied their child with a mobile phone.

The use of mobile devices including mobile phones and 'smart' watches can be disruptive to the learning environment of all students. To ensure that the rights of all students and staff are respected as well as ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment, the use of personal mobile devices by any students for any purpose is not permitted at West Coast SESC.

It is preferred that students do not bring these mobile devices to school, but it is recognised that parents/carers may wish to provide mobile devices to protect their child from every day risks involving personal safety and security, and for reassurance. If a student brings a mobile phone to school it must be handed in to school administration, or the classroom teacher, at the start of each day. The phone will then be locked in the office or class safe until the end of the school day when it will be returned to the student. 'Smart' watches must be set to airplane mode or similar during school hours.

If a student is found to be in possession of a mobile phone during the school day, or is using their 'smart' watch to access the internet, it will be confiscated and locked in the school safe. Confiscated devices will need to be collected by the student at the end of the school day. Repeated breaches will result in the mobile device being confiscated until a parent/carer is able to collect it. Please be aware that school staff cannot accept any responsibility for student's mobile devices in any circumstance.

Breaches of this policy will be managed in accordance with the school's behaviour management procedures. This may include, but not be limited to; confiscation (multiple offences may require collection by a parent/carer) or loss of good standing.

All communication between parents and students, during school hours, should occur via the school's administration.

Exemptions to this include: where a student needs to monitor a health condition as part of a documented health care plan approved by the school principal (or delegate); or under the direct instruction of a teacher for educational purposes; or with permission of a teacher for a specified purpose.