

# EDGEWORTH PUBLIC SCHOOL

## STUDENT USE OF MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOLS PROCEDURES



### 1. Purpose

This procedure guides the safe and responsible use of connected devices for students at Edgeworth Public School. Connected devices are those that receive a cellular signal (this includes smart watches with 4G/LTE connectivity).

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.

### 2. Scope

This procedure 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 connected devices 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 personal digital devices.

### 3. Our School's Approach

In line with NSW Department of Education's *Student Use of Mobile Phones in Schools Policy (PD-2023-0480-V01.0.0)* which states that "students are not allowed to use mobile phones at school, including during recess and lunch", Edgeworth Public School does not support the use or possession of personal connected devices, **including but not limited to mobiles phones and connected smart watches**, by students while at school. Exemptions to this will be considered by the principal in order to meet the learning or support needs (including medical reasons) of students, as outlined in section 3.1 of these procedures.

Edgeworth Public School understands that some students may bring connected devices to school for use after school hours and off the school premises. During school hours, the use of personal connected devices is strictly prohibited, ensuring students remain focused on educational activities without distractions. Upon entering school each morning, all student-owned connected devices must be securely stored within specially provided pouches. These pouches are designed to lock and block signals to the devices, effectively preventing their use during the school day. Edgeworth Public School will issue one pouch to each student that brings a connected device to school. **When taking possession of a pouch, families must acknowledge and sign an agreement outlining their responsibility to safeguard the pouch, return it upon departure from the school, and the procedures for replacing lost or damaged pouches at a cost of \$20.** Students are required to place their devices into these pouches, which can be locked by simply pressing down on the stud. At the conclusion of the school day, students can unlock their pouches using a magnetic unlocking mechanism located at the school gates. Please refer to the flowchart in *Appendix 1* for further information.

Circumstances in which students are found to be in possession of or using a device in breach of these procedures will be managed in line with section 3.2 of this policy. The legality of the confiscation of student property is addressed by the NSW DoE in *Legal Issues Bulletin 56, LIB56*. This bulletin explains that "principals have the authority to maintain discipline in schools and provide safe, supportive and responsive learning environments for both students and staff. To give effect to this authority, if any

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property or item is being used inappropriately by a student, principals and staff have the power of confiscation”.

### 3.1 Exemptions

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. When requesting an exemption, families must complete the *Devices in Schools Exemption Request Form (Appendix 2)*.

### 3.2 Consequences for inappropriate use

Where a student is found to be in possession of or using a device outside of approved exemptions or not securing a device correctly, the principal and staff have the power to confiscate a student's device until the end of the school day. Action will be taken by the school to secure any personal property confiscated from a student (under no circumstances will the personal property of students be left in unlocked desk drawers, on teachers' tables or in staff rooms); please see *Appendix 3* for further information.

A summary of the procedures our staff will follow for each breach and subsequent breaches can be found below.

#### Breach 1

Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Student may pick up device from office at 3:10pm.  
**Parent/carer notified via email from Assistant Principal.**

#### Breach 2

Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Parent/carer must pick up device from office. **Meeting between parent/carer and DP.**

#### Breach 3

Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Parent/carer must pick up device from office.  
**Formal caution issued. Student to deposit phone in phone locker (in office) daily for set timeframe.**

If a student refuses to hand over a device for confiscation, staff will not remove the property by force. Further action will be taken under the school's *School Behaviour Support and Management Plan* and the student will be referred to the principal or other relevant school executive.

To ensure adherence to our mobile phone policy, regular checks will be conducted by staff throughout the school term. These checks are designed to encourage compliance with the *Student Use of Mobile Phones in Schools Procedures*, reinforcing our commitment to maintaining an environment conducive to learning.



### **3.3 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 their classroom teacher to discuss the matter who may contact home on behalf of the students; or send the student to the administration office where contact can be made with home by administration staff.

Should a parent need to contact their child during the school day, they must:

- Only contact their children via the school office.

## **4. Responsibilities and obligations**

Supporting students to use digital devices in safe, responsible and respectful ways is a shared responsibility.

### **4.1 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.

### **4.2 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's procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices at home, such as the 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.

### **4.3 For principal and teachers**

- 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 are able to engage in classroom activities including strategies to accommodate students without a digital device.
  - 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.

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- Model appropriate use of digital devices and online services in line with departmental policy.
- 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.
  - Following the school's behaviour management plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services.
- 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.

### **4.4 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 to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with.

## **5. Communicating this procedure to the school community**

This procedure will be presented to the school's Parents & Citizens Association meeting for review, feedback and ratification.

This procedure will be presented to the school's teaching staff for review, feedback and ratification.

Students will be informed about this procedure through classroom reminders and stage assemblies.

Parents and carers will be advised via the school newsletter and school Facebook page. This procedure can be accessed electronically via the school's website and in hardcopy at the school's administration office.

## **6. 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.

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### 7. Review

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually.

#### 7.1 Review Date

This document was created on 01 November 2023.

This document was last reviewed on 29 April 2024.

Next review date is 29 April 2025.

Completed by: Zachary Morton and Kendall McCallum

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z Morton'.

Date: 29 April 2024

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K McCallum'.

Date: 29 April 2024

Principal Name: Rebecca Baird (Rel.)

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'RB'.

Date: 29 April 2024



### Appendix 1



## Mobile Phones in Schools Procedures

- STEP  
**01**



**Switch Off**

Phones and personal tech must be **switched off and locked in your pouch** when you arrive at the gate.
- STEP  
**02**



**Stay Off**

Phone and personal tech **stay off and away all day** including breaks and excursions.
- STEP  
**03**



**Forgot your pouch?**

**Elect to store your tech.**  
Phone lockers are available in the office
- STEP  
**04**



**Breaches**

If you are found in possession of a device outside an approved exemption, **staff have the right of confiscation.**
- STEP  
**05**

Breach 1	Breach 2	Breach 3
Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Student may pick up device from office at 3:30pm. Parent/carer notified via email from Assistant Principal.	Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Parent/ carer must pick up device from office. Meeting between parent/carer and DP.	Tech secured in phone locker located in Administration office for the day. Parent/ carer must pick up device from office. Formal caution issued. Student to deposit phone in phone locker (in office) daily for set timeframe.

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### **Appendix 2**

### **DEVICE EXEMPTION/ACCOMMODATION APPLICATION**

Any exemptions or accommodations in relation to the Edgeworth Public School Mobile Phone Procedures will be informed by DoE policy and will only occur as part of either and visual Education Plan (IEP) adjustment (if it is a case of learning needs) or a Health Care Plan provision in the case of medical needs.

Evidence is required for provisions to be considered as a plan update. As part of this, in consultation with parents/carers, the student and the school, the plan will clearly identify the device use that has been approved by the principal as an acceptable adjustment. If a student uses their device outside of this approved adjustment, this will be addressed following usual behaviour and disciplinary processes.

### **REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS**

A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability or medical condition to participate in their learning on the same basis as other students. Reasonable adjustments may be applied for with supporting documentation. A letter from a medical professional must explicitly state when and how a device should be used. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Learning Support Team (LST) and principal. The application outcome will be at the discretion of the principal. Examples of reasonable adjustments may include:

- Health monitoring – for example, students with insulin monitors linked to an app on their phone. These students may be provided with a non-locking pouch to allow them to check their phone as required to respond to alerts or alarms. •
- Hearing aid control – adjusting volume for hearing aid in class and during breaks as needed. These students may be provided with a non-locking pouch to allow them to check their phone as required.
- For mental health concerns or sensory requirements – it is strongly encouraged that alternate resources be considered to replace mobile phone use as well as an option for students to access resources in the timeout/wellbeing space provided by the school.
  - Please note, the school counselling team cannot provide supporting documentation for an exemption request as this would be considered a conflict of interest.

### **EXEMPTION**

An ongoing or temporary exemption may be considered in exceptional circumstances. Following a learning support conversation and the application process the principal will review and determine an outcome on a case-by-case basis. It should be noted that any adjustment/exemption request that relies on direct student contact with a parent (bypassing the school) may be considered unsafe and therefore not a reasonable adjustment that can be supported. This is due to the importance of the school being aware of any urgent student issue so staff can support and respond immediately during the school day. Students will be supported to contact home for urgent reasons however this communication is likely to come directly from the school.

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### APPLICATION: STUDENT DETAILS

Name:		Year:	
Device Description:			

Please choose from the following (select 'yes' to all that apply):

I am applying for an ongoing exemption for my young person.	Yes	No
I am applying for a temporary exemption for my young person.	Yes	No
If a temporary exemption, please specify the start and end dates:	Start	End

I am applying for a reasonable learning adjustment to support my young person.	Yes	No
I am applying for an exemption on the grounds of mental health concerns.	Yes	No

Does the student have a diagnosed disability / medical / health condition?	Yes	No
Does the student have an existing individual education plan and/or health care plan?	Yes	No
Have you provided medical documentation / letter from a medical professional to support this application?	Yes	No



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Please outline the reason for your application. Include any current information that will assist in the decision process. This may include information about student diagnosis and/or their medical condition.

### APPLICATION SUBMISSION

The application will be reviewed by the principal and the outcome will be communicated to the person who submitted the application. Any outcome in support of a reasonable adjustment or exemption will be formally recorded in the student's individual learning plan or health care plan. This will be evaluated as per annual plan review procedures.

Submit this application at the administration office or by email to:  
[edgeworth-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:edgeworth-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au)

- I understand a learning support meeting may be requested by the deputy principal and/or assistant principal learning and support to assist with the application outcome and/or relevant plan updates to support my child.

Name:
Relationship to student:
Email:
Signature:

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### Appendix 3

### DEVICE COLLECTION SLIP



## DEVICE COLLECTION

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE handed in: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

TIME handed in: \_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_ AM / PM

DP K-2    DP 3-6    AP \_\_\_\_\_    OFFICE \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES:

*i.e. Device condition*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## DEVICE RETURN

DEVICE to be returned to: STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/ CARER \_\_\_\_\_

DATE collected: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

TIME collected: \_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_ AM/ PM

DEVICE return confirmation:

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Name                                      Signature                                      Date