Catholic Schools - Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Guideline

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The purpose of this guideline is to provide a flexible framework that enables schools in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle (the Diocese) to manage student mobile phone and wearable technologies use.

(2) This guideline articulates responsibilities for school workers, students and parents to ensure that mobile phones and wearable technologies are used appropriately and safely at school.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This guideline applies to school workers, students, parents and carers.

Section 3 - Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Chief Operating Officer	Approve the Schools Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Guideline.
Director of Schools	Lead commitment to this guideline.
Catholic Schools Learning and Wellbeing Education Officers	Where appropriate, build school workers knowledge and understanding of inclusive pedagogical practices that support student use of mobile phones for learning.
Principals	Principals establish a school Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan in consultation with school workers, students and parents/carers that best suits their school, noting any exemptions where student use is permitted during school hours, ensuring it is consistent with this guideline. Lead and oversee school worker and student compliance with this guideline and the school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan, which may include purchase of mobile phone storage solutions. Communicate the school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan to school workers, students and school community, including: • Agreed approach adopted by the school. • Exemption requests, confirming documentation needed (such as including exemptions into Personalised Learning Plans). • Mobile Phone and wearable technologies storage and access arrangements during the day. • How parents and students can stay in contact during school hours when necessary. • Seek support from Catholic Schools where required for effective implementation.
School Workers	Model appropriate and responsible use (schools) of mobile phones and wearable technologies in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Privacy Policy. Respond to and report any inappropriate use of mobile phones or wearable technologies. Comply with this policy and implement the School's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan for their school.

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ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
Students	Comply with school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan for their school. Where applicable, comply with the school's Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement. Model responsible use (schools) of mobile phones and wearable technologies in accordance with the School Community Code of Conduct and school's Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement, respecting the privacy and rights of others where a school permits use of mobile phones and/or wearable technologies. Report any inappropriate use of mobile phones, in breach of this guideline and schools Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan.
Parents and carers	Support policy implementation and school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan, including: • Submission of exemption requests with the required supporting documentation. • Refrain from contacting their child on their personal mobile phones and wearable technologies during school hours, in order to maintain a safe productive learning environment for all students. • Contact their child during school hours in accordance with school communication processes. Comply with Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement

Section 4 - Guideline

Benefits Associated with Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies

(4) The Diocese recognises mobile phones and wearable technologies can have positive educational and social benefits.

(5) Mobile Phones and wearable technologies are digital tools that can be used for educational purposes to:

a. enhance students' learning and creativity skills;
b. assist in developing their digital literacy capability;
c. improve their digital citizenship: and
d. support their safety travelling to and from school.

(6) Mobile Phones and wearable technologies may be used for the following purposes including but not limited to:

a. accessing relevant learning apps not available on laptops;
b. accessing organisational tools such as calendars and Student Information Systems;
c. using accessibility tools to support access to learning content;
d. capturing video or photographs for learning tasks; and
e. using camera tool to scan QR codes enabling quick easy access to digital content or tasks.

Risks Associated with Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies

(7) The Diocese recognises that mobile phones and wearable technologies can pose risks and challenges to student wellbeing and learning.

(8) Potential risks associated with student use of mobile phones and wearable technologies includes but is not limited to:

a. distraction from and disruptions to learning;
b. cyberbullying;
c. access to inappropriate materials;

d. social interaction challenges caused by excessive use which may hinder development of social and communication skills;
e. decline in physical activity impacting on physical health; and
f. compromised privacy caused by unauthorised recording.

Options for the Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies

(9) A school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan reflects expectations for how devices are to be managed, where devices are to be stored, and any exceptions that allow for use of mobile phones and wearable technologies. It can reflect any of the following approved approaches:

Switched off and away

(10) This means all mobile phones and wearable technologies will be 'off and away' and stored safely in their bag or locker during school hours.

(11) Students will be responsible for switching off their mobile phones and wearable technologies upon entering school grounds and storing it safely in their bag or locker during school hours.

(12) Students are not permitted to remove their mobile phones and wearable technologies from storage to use during school hours including designated school breaks.

(13) Students may remove their mobile phones and wearable technologies from storage and switch on upon the conclusion of school hours when leaving school grounds.

(14) This approach applies to school-related settings

Stored in locked pouches during school hours

(15) This means all mobile phones and wearable technologies are required to be turned off and placed in a locked pouch during school hours.

(16) Students will be responsible for switching off their mobile phones and wearable technologies and placing them in the locked pouch upon entering school grounds and storing the pouch during school hours.

(17) Students are not permitted to remove their mobile phones and wearable technologies from the locked pouch to use during school hours including designated school breaks.

(18) Students may unlock the pouch when school hours conclude or as they depart school grounds if leaving early.

(19) They may switch on their mobile phones and wearable technologies after they exit school grounds.

(20) Schools are responsible for funding, administering and managing locked pouches at a school level.

Devices stored in school office during school hours

(21) This means all mobile phones and wearable technologies will be stored securely in the School Office during school hours.

(22) The process to hand in devices at the commencement of school hours and to return devices at the conclusion of the school day is a school-based decision to be made at the discretion of Principal or Executive.

(23) Process to hand in devices and return devices must be articulated in the school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan.

(24) Students may either hand in their mobile phone and wearable technologies at the school office on arrival to school grounds or hand in to their classroom teacher at the commencement of lessons or roll call. Devices will either be returned to students by their classroom teacher at the conclusion of the school day or collected from school office as they depart school grounds.

Variations to the Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies

(25) The Principal may specify variations to the above approaches in their Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan. Variations might include:

a. Students may use mobile phones and wearable technologies during designated school breaks to make payments at the canteen.
b. Students may use mobile phones and wearable technologies during designated school breaks to check compass for timetables.
c. Students may use their mobile phones and wearable technologies for learning activities during lessons at teacher discretion.
d. Students may adjust the setting of their wearable technologies whereby they cannot receive calls, messages and notifications during school hours, thus enabling the wearable technology to be used as a watch.
e. Mobile Phones and wearable technologies are not permitted to be taken to school-related events in school-related settings, unless specified otherwise.
f. Students may use mobile phones and wearable technologies in school related settings at specific times. This is made on case-by-case basis, articulated in the event details and explicitly communicated at the commencement of the event.

Students with a Medical, Wellbeing or Learning Need to Access Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies

(26) Students who have a significant diagnosed (or imputed) medical or learning need which will require them to access a mobile phone or wearable technologies may seek an exemption based on these grounds.

(27) Appropriate evidence or supporting documentation will be required to support this request.

(28) Approval of exemptions are made by the Principal or Executive staff and communicated in writing to parents/carers.

Parent/Carer and child contact during school hours

(29) Parents/Carers should refrain from contacting their child on their personal mobile phone and wearable technologies during school hours, in order to maintain a safe productive learning environment for all students.

(30) If a parent/carer wishes to contact their child during school hours, they may do so through the school as per their communicated processes or as articulated in event details for school-related settings.

Student Use of Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement.

(31) Schools may choose to adopt the Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement or incorporate into their school Student Code of Conduct.

Section 5 - Consequences of Breaching this

Guideline

(32) Students found to breach this guideline and the school's Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan may be subject to disciplinary action as per Catholic Schools Behaviour Management Policy and individual school Behaviour Management Plan/Procedure.

Section 6 - Appendix- For Staff Use Only

(33) Please note the below documents are templates and will require amendments to the areas in Red, all other content in the document should not be changed.

Appendix A: Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan

(34) Please click on the link to view the Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan

Appendix B:Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies User Agreement

(35) Please click on the link to view the Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies User Agreement

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	28th March 2025
Review Date	28th March 2028
Approval Authority	Chief Operating Officer
Approval Date	28th March 2025
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
Unit Head	Jacqueline Wilkinson Director Catholic Schools
Enquiries Contact	Catholic Schools

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Mobile Phone" - Combines mobile telephone functions (calling and messaging) with digital device functions (web browser, digital apps/programs access, camera) into one device. Also known as a smartphone.

"Wearable Technologies" - Electronic devices that can be worn as accessories that perform similar functions as mobile phone such as calls, messages, audio recording, timers and health monitoring. Such devices can take many different forms, including smart watches, jewellery, accessories, medical devices, and clothing or elements of clothing. Wearable technologies also refer to headphones which connect to mobile devices to receive calls.

"Educational Purposes" - Supports student learning, wellbeing and educational outcomes.

"Responsible Use (schools)" - Use for educational purposes where no harm occurs.

"Student Use of Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies Management Plan" - Clearly articulates how Mobile Phones and Wearable Technologies are permitted to be used by students within the school environment, during school hours and within school related settings.

"School Hours" - The time at which the school opens and concludes at dismissal at end of the school day. In school related settings, school hours refer to the duration of the school-related events.

"School Grounds" - All areas within the boundaries of the school property, including but not limited to classrooms, bathrooms, playgrounds, sports fields, carparks, and any buildings or facilities owned or operated by the school or Diocese.

"School-related settings" - Refers to school-related events taking place outside of school grounds where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students, such as excursions, camps, representative sport, social events.

"Designated school breaks" - Includes recess, lunch, all breaks between lessons and between activities in school-related settings.

"Student Mobile Phone and Wearable Technologies User Agreement" - User agreement that articulates the school's terms of use and storage requirements for mobile phones and or wearable technologies at school and in school-related settings. This agreement is to be signed by students and their parent.

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