Student use of digital devices and online services procedure

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GOULBURN HIGH SCHOOL

Student use of digital devices and online services procedure

Purpose

This procedure guides student use of our school's digital devices and online services. 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.

Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students, parents and carers. It also provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing. This procedure covers student use of digital devices and online services 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.

The Goulburn High School (GHS) procedure sets out the expectations for students surrounding the use of digital devices on school grounds, including what constitutes a digital device and the consequences should an incident arise where students are using these where not permitted. The school's approach to monitoring this is through the school's discipline management system.

Our school's approach

Starting from Term 4, 2023, under the Department of Education's Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Policy, we will be imposing a 'Gate to Gate' ban on the use of mobile phones and digital devices in our school.

The 'Gate to Gate' ban means students are not allowed to use their mobile phones while on the school grounds, including in the classroom, toilets, transition time between classes, during Break 1 and Break 2, and even during extracurricular activities such as school excursions and camps.

For the purpose of this procedure, 'mobile phones and digital devices' include smartwatches and all other electronic devices (i.e. tablets, music players), as well as their associated listening accessories – such as, but not limited to, headphones, air pods, earbuds and speakers in our school.

Protocol of consequences

At school
Student/s will be sent to the deputy principals for infractions of the procedure with a Purple Slip, and the incident will be logged on Compass. The incident will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Discipline Procedure, which may include the following:

- Orange monitoring card
- Red monitoring card
- Formal caution of suspension
- Device confiscation and collection by parent/guardian
- Suspension for behaviours that cause actual harm or unacceptable risk to health and safety, learning and or wellbeing.

In excursions & camps
Student/s will be sent to the event coordinator for infractions of the procedure, and the incident will be logged on Compass. Due to the nature of the activity, the student may not complete the requirements for an infraction until the student returns to school. The incident will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Discipline Procedure, which may include the following:

- Orange monitoring card
- Red monitoring card
- Formal caution of suspension
- Device confiscation and collection by parent/guardian
- Suspension for behaviours that cause actual harm or unacceptable risk to health and safety, learning and or wellbeing.

Exemptions

An exemption from parts of this school procedure can be requested from the principal by parents, carers, school counsellors and other student support staff, and, if required, students themselves. This may cover times when or places where use would otherwise be restricted. Except where required by law, the school principal has discretion to consider and approve exemptions and to choose which parts of the school procedure the exemptions apply. The exemption may be ongoing or for a certain period of time.

Event coordinators may request special permission from the principal for students to use phones in certain school events by completing an Exemption Form.

Contact between students and, parents and carers during the school day

Should a student need to contact a parent or carer during the school day, they must approach the administration office and ask for permission to use the school's phone.

During school hours, parents and carers are required to only contact their children via the school office.

Responsibilities and obligations

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 as described in the Behaviour Code for Students.

For parents and carers
Recognise the role they play in educating their child and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services.

Support the implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues.

Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services 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 (https://education.nsw.gov.au/public-schools/going-to-a-public-school/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.

Provide digital devices that meet school specifications where a school is participating in a bring-your-own device program and complete any related paperwork.

For the 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; and educating students about online privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy and other online safety related issues.

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; and 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, 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 using digital devices and online services appropriately.

For non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors
Be aware of the Department's policy and this procedure and act in line with the conduct described.

Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or staff they work with.

Communicating this procedure to the school community

Students
Student preferences have been explored via a Student Representative Council meeting.

The school procedure was explained and discussed at a whole-school assembly.

Classroom teachers will inform their students about this new procedure.

Parents and carers
Parent and carer preferences have been explored via a P&C meeting.

This procedure can be accessed electronically via the school's website and in hard copy at the school's administration office.

Parents and carers have been advised via the school newsletter.

Complaints

If a student, parent or carer has a complaint under this procedure, they should first follow our school's complaints process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the Department's guide for making a complaint about our schools (https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/rights-and-accountability/complaints-compliments-and-suggestions).

Review

The principal or delegated staff will review this procedure annually.

Appendix 1: Key terms

Digital citizenship refers to the skills and knowledge a person needs to effectively use digital technologies in a positive way so they can participate in society, communicate with others, and create and consume digital content.

Digital devices are electronic devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services. They include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones and other devices.

Online bullying involves using technology such as the internet or mobile devices to bully someone. Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, and it involves behaviours that can cause harm. Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Online safety is the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital media, devices, other technology and online services.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where: there is a discussion about school taking place outside of school hours; a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises; a relationship between parties commenced at school; students are online in digital classrooms; and where online contact has flow-on consequences at school and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

School staff refers to school personnel who have some level of responsibility for implementing policy and the school digital devices and online service procedure. This includes principals, senior staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, school administrative staff, volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools.

Appendix 2: What is safe, responsible and respectful student behaviour?

Be safe
Protect your personal information, including your name, address, school, email address, telephone number, pictures of you and other personal details.

Ask a teacher or other responsible adult for help if anyone online asks for your personal information, wants to meet you or offers you money or gifts.

Let a teacher or other responsible adult know immediately if you find anything online that is suspicious, harmful, inappropriate or makes you uncomfortable.

Be responsible
Follow all school rules and instructions from school staff, including when using digital devices and online services.

Take care with the digital devices you use: make sure the devices you bring to school are fully charged each day and are stored appropriately when not in use; understand that you and your parents and carers are responsible for any repairs or IT support your personal devices might need; make sure the devices you bring to school have the latest software installed and take care with the school-owned devices you share with others so that other people can use them after you.

Use online services in responsible and age-appropriate ways: only use online services in the ways agreed to with your teacher; only access appropriate content and websites, including when using the school's filtered network and personal, unfiltered networks; and do not use online services to buy or sell things online, to gamble or to do anything that breaks the law.

Understand that everything done on the school's network is monitored and can be used in investigations, court proceedings or for other legal reasons.

Be respectful
Respect and protect the privacy, safety and wellbeing of others.

Do not share anyone else's personal information.

Get permission before you take a photo or video of someone, including from the person and from a teacher.

Do not harass or bully other students, school staff or anyone; this includes cyberbullying using a digital device or online service.

Appendix 3: Specifications required for bring your own devices

Wireless connectivity
Wireless internet connection—The DoE wireless network installed in high schools now operates on both 802.11n 5 GHz standard and 2.4 GHz standard.

Software and apps
The ability to accommodate office applications (such programs could be but are not restricted to Microsoft Office, Google Docs, open office etc).

Battery life
Battery life of at least 4 hours

Storage and RAM
Memory: minimum of 2GB preferred 4GB and a minimum storage capacity of 16GB

Hardware features
It is preferred that the device does not come with 3/4G capability as the school Wi-Fi network filters unwanted, potentially dangerous content. 3/4G access will be only permitted with specific permission from a teacher under very special circumstances.

Accessories and other considerations
Screen size must be no smaller than 7", as less than this is difficult to view. No more than 15" recommended.

Appendix 4. Research - Mobile phone use in the classroom

There is extensive research emerging on the use of mobile phones by young people. Included below is an edited review of the available literature.

How smart is it to allow students to use mobile phones at school? Reports on a study of mobile phone bans in England. The bans led to:

- Improvements in student achievement
- An increase in test scores for students aged 16 by an amount equal to adding five extra days to the school year.

Lower-achieving students made the greatest improvements.

https://theconversation.com/how-smart-is-it-to-allow-students-to-use-mobile-phones-at- school-40621

Mobile phones in the classroom: A helpful or harmful hindrance? outlines recent research. Phones can be a distraction and their removal from the classroom can see an improvement in student performance. Students who did not use smartphones in a lecture wrote 62 per cent more information in their notes and recalled more information than peers who were using their phones.

https://psychlopaedia.org/learning-and-development/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a- helpful-or-harmful-hindrance/

'Schools need to react quickly': Education expert urges smartphone ban discusses smartphone use in schools. According to Finnish expert Dr Sahlberg, smartphone distraction is one of the main reasons why Australia is sliding down Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings.

https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/schools-need-to-react-quickly-education-expert- urges-smartphone-ban-20180525-p4zhm4.html

Research – Cognition and smart phone use

Smartphones and Cognition: A Review of Research Exploring the Links between Mobile Technology Habits and Cognitive Functioning is a review of academic research on mobile phones. The review looked for evidence of effects of smartphone use on cognition. It reported that habitual smartphone use may have a negative and lasting impact on users' ability to:

- think
- remember
- pay attention
- regulate emotion.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5403814/

The Mere Presence of Your Smartphone Reduces Brain Power, Study Shows The research finds it does not matter whether a smartphone is on or off or lying face up or face down on a desk - having a smartphone within sight or within easy reach reduces a person's ability to focus and perform tasks, because part of their brain is actively working to not pick up or use the phone.

https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces- brain-power/

Research - Smartphones use by children and young people and wellbeing. Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After

2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen Time shows that, on average, teenagers are spending six hours per day:

- using the internet
- texting friends
- using social media.

The surveys explore the links between the use of smartphones, particularity social media, and increases in depression, anxiety, and reduced happiness.

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2167702617723376

Dopamine, Smartphones & You: A battle for your time, a Harvard University blog discusses our desire to connect and seek validation through technologies and how this can lead to anxiety, poor sleep, and unsuccessful social interactions. The blog explains how mobile phone content can influence our 'dopamine pathways and lead to a battle for increasingly of the users' time.

http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2018/dopamine-smartphones-battle-time/

The Social Dilemma is a Netflix documentary-drama hybrid that examines the many ways social media and social networking companies have manipulated human psychology to rewire the human brain and what it means for society in general. One of the most striking sections of the documentary is the one that touches on the vulnerability of teenagers who use platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and multiple others every single day and have been moulded by social media's influences. This section of the film is highlighted by statistics on depression, anxiety, and even suicide rates of teenagers that correlate with the rise of social media.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y_KiBxKePI&feature=youtu.be

As always there is a contrary view so please also check out this short ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) **RN evaluation** https://youtu.be/9y_KiBxKePI