



Beverly Hills Girls High School

Providing quality education for young women

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR MOBILE PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PED)

Introduction:

The Mobile Phone and Personal Electronic Devices (PED) Acceptable Use Policy at Beverly Hills Girls High School aims to foster an environment that enhances student learning, safety, and well-being by managing the potential risks and distractions posed by digital technology accessed via mobile phones, smartwatches, and other personal electronic devices. This policy outlines the established guidelines for regulating students' use of these devices within the school.

Scope:

For the purposes of this policy, "mobile phones and other personal electronic devices" encompass smartwatches, electronic gadgets (such as iPads and branded tablets), and related accessories, including but not limited to headphones, Air Pods, and earbuds.

Educational Context:

In New South Wales Public Schools, secondary school principals, in consultation with their communities, have the authority to make decisions regarding the restriction or permission of student use of digital devices and online services in all school-related settings, including recess, lunch, and classroom sessions. We acknowledge the significance of digital devices and online services in modern life and their influence on how children and young adults learn, communicate, work, and play. Therefore, it is essential that learning environments, both at school and at home, promote the development of technological, social, and emotional competencies while minimising the potential risks and maximising the benefits of digital environments.

Policy Goals:

The primary goals of this policy are as follows:

- Create a safe learning environment that prevents inappropriate mobile phone use (including cyberbullying) and distractions from learning.
- Provide students with more opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtime to enhance their sense of belonging.

Rationale:

While mobile phones and similar devices offer numerous advantages in the broader community, their use in educational settings presents challenges. These devices can significantly disrupt learning and have been found to negatively impact a student's cognitive load. Furthermore, they pose potential risks to student safety and well-being due to unfiltered and unsupervised internet access and social networking.

Balancing Benefits and Risks:

The use of technology is important, but it must be managed to mitigate associated risks. Detailed research findings informing this policy are provided in Appendix 1.

Student Expectations:

Students are prohibited from using mobile phones and personal electronic devices on school grounds at all times. "School grounds" includes school excursions and approved activities on or off-site, unless otherwise instructed.

Mobile phones must remain turned off and stowed away from the moment students enter the school grounds in the morning until they reach the designated bus line area or leave school premises after 3:00 pm. This includes time spent in the playground before school and during breaks.

If students wear smartwatches, they must switch them to "airplane mode" for the entire school day. The use of smartwatches is discouraged.

Charging of mobile phones or devices during school hours is not allowed.

Laptops are exempt from the ban, but students are discouraged from using them before school or during breaks in the playground. If students wish to use laptops at these times, they must do so in the library or in a classroom under the supervision of a teacher.

Laptops and tablets should not be used for gaming at school unless it is for educational purposes and students have been instructed by a teacher as part of a class learning activity.

Students must promptly place their mobile phones or electronic devices in the designated phone box when instructed by school staff. Failure to do so may result in further consequences as per the school's Quality Learning Levels policy.

Students must take full responsibility for any mobile phone or similar device brought to school, as the school and staff will not be held responsible for their loss, theft, or damage. Students who bring these devices to school do so at their own risk.

Exceptions/Accommodations:

A limited number of exceptions will be granted only in the following circumstances:

- Managing a health condition:
- Health-related exemptions may be requested by parents or caregivers by contacting the Principal. In cases of mental health issues, such as anxiety, a letter from a medical professional is required. This letter must specify when and how the mobile phone is to be used and demonstrate that access to a mobile phone is the only viable treatment or support option. Note that students requiring mood regulation apps will be supported in accessing them on school-issued devices.
- Students with insulin monitors or other health devices linked to their phone may carry their phone in their pocket and use it as needed to respond to alerts or alarms. Families of students to whom this applies must inform the school.
- Teacher-directed/supervised learning activity:

Teachers may grant classroom-based learning exceptions for specific purposes and a specific time frame. For example, when creating digital media or capturing images for use in assignments or class activities. Teachers providing such permission will notify students as required and supervise device use for the specified purpose.

Purchasing at the canteen or paying at the front office:

Students may use their mobile phones/devices to pay for food or drinks at the canteen or for school fees and excursions at the front office. Devices can only be removed and used at the counter and must be put away immediately after use.

Parent or Caregiver Expectations:

Messages for students during the school day should be directed through the school's front office, rather than via the student's device. Students will be allowed to use a phone in the front office for contact with their parents only in cases of acceptable reasons.

Parents and caregivers should understand that the school does not take responsibility for loss or damage to phones or personal electronic devices.

Collaboration with the school to reinforce Beverly Hills Girls High School's Use of Personal Electronic Devices Policy with their child(ren) is expected.

In emergencies, parents should contact their children through the school front office at the phone number 9150 4280.

Improper Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices:

Improper use of mobile phones, personal electronic devices, and related accessories will result in students being directed by staff to surrender their devices to the front office, including laptops. Confiscation of devices is appropriate in the following scenarios:

When students fail to meet the school's expectations regarding appropriate device use.

When students are suspected of bullying, threatening, or harassing other students or staff through their devices.

When devices are used to interfere with the safety and well-being of staff and students or the school's operation.

Further disciplinary action will be taken if students:

- Are caught using their device in class or the playground contrary to school expectations.
- Use their phone to create a hotspot for a laptop or computer.
- Use their device to bully, intimidate, or harass other individuals through voice calls, text messages, photos, videos, or other data transfer methods available on the device.
- Possess, or are suspected of possessing, material on their phone that poses a risk to their safety and well-being or that of other students or staff.
- Use digital devices to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the school's operation.
- Use or are suspected of using devices to record images, video, or sound without permission or consent.

Possible consequences for violating the mobile phone policy include:

- Confiscation of the Device: Students are expected to comply without argument when asked to surrender their phones. Failure to do so may lead to further disciplinary action.
- Lunchtime/After School Detention or Other Appropriate Disciplinary Measures: Depending on the school's discipline policy, students may receive detention or other suitable disciplinary actions.

- Two-Week Phone Privilege Suspension: Students who breach the policy may have their phone-carrying privileges revoked for a two-week period.
- Suspension: In cases of repeated policy violations when other disciplinary measures have proven ineffective, suspension may be imposed.

Discipline for Phones and Accessories:

If a student is found with their phone outside of their bag or inappropriately using devices connected to their phone, they must surrender their phones. The incident will be recorded as a Mobile Phone Breach, and the phone will be returned at the end of the day.

Refusal to surrender a phone will result in escalation:

Refusal may lead to after-school detention.

Persistent defiance may involve intervention by the Deputy Principal or Principal.

Continued breaches may lead to:

- Parent contact.
- Mobile phone monitoring.
- A formal caution with the possibility of suspension.
- Discipline for Laptops:

Students caught using their laptop inappropriately will be asked to surrender their laptop. Those requiring a laptop will need to borrow a device from the library.

Refusal to hand in a laptop will be handled as described in the "Discipline - Phones and Accessories" section.

Evaluation:

This policy will be subject to review as part of the school's regular policy review cycle.

Last Ratified:

Reviewed 4th March 2024.