

## Balranald Central School Mobile Phone Policy & Procedure: 'Off & Away'

Balranald Central School supports the restrictions of mobile phones in accordance with the NSW Department of Education: Students' Use of Mobile Phones in Schools policy <https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-management-schools/student-use-of-mobile-phones>

Mobile phone use in schools can impact student learning and wellbeing. Restricting mobile phone use at school aims to increase focus in classrooms, remove distractions and promote positive social interaction, while reducing the potential for online bullying. Balranald Central School has strong teaching and learning practices to support students in the classroom using various forms of appropriate technology, which maximises the benefits and minimises the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school. We foster a safe learning environment which supports and enhances each child's social and emotional health through our wellbeing and learning support teams.

Our school has revised our existing mobile policy in 2023. 'Off & Away' is an approved NSW Department of Education option and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing approach to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment. The policy extends beyond the classroom to include all areas of the school including classrooms, between classes, in toilets, during breaks, during extracurricular activities such as school excursions and camps. Students are NOT permitted to use mobile phones for electronic/financial transactions at the canteen or the front office. Students are to use a card if they require access to EFTPOS.

The '*Off and Away*' policy means that student mobile phones are not to be seen or used while on school grounds. **Students will have a responsibility to turn off their phone and store it safely in their school bag for the course of the school day.** This does not include storing phone in pocket, jumpers, pencil case etc. Parents and students are aware that phones brought to school are at student's own risk. All bags are stored OUTSIDE classrooms during lessons. Students are able to hire locker via the front office, for the duration of their schooling at BCS.

Consequences will apply if students choose not to follow the mobile phone policy. This can include temporary and parent/carer contact (*see procedure*).

School procedure to include managing individual requests from parents and/or carers, and students, for any exemptions to the school mobile phone policy. Allowance for students to use mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as for an educational purpose, to achieve student health and wellbeing outcomes, or as part of reasonable adjustment to enable students with specific needs to participate in education on the same basis as other students are to be negotiated with the principal case-by-case, and communicated to relevant staff.

Balranald Central School understands there may be students who have a medical, wellbeing or learning need which will require them to access a mobile phone as defined in this plan. The Principal will meet with each student and their parents and carers, and an exemption request will be completed and considered case-by-case in order to determine where an exemption will be applied for, on behalf of a student, as well as the adjustments to any school-based practices and procedures.

Balranald Central School understands there will always be emergencies when parents need to get in contact with students or vice versa during the school day. We try to keep this to a minimum, with the exception of emergencies, to avoid disturbing the students' learning. All communication is via the FRONT OFFICE, and all classrooms have telephone access to the front office at all times.

# 'Off & Away' – Procedure for Misuse of Mobile Phones on School Grounds

## LEVEL 4

Mobile phone

is seen and/or in use

– 4<sup>th</sup> incident in current term

- (i) Front Office is notified
- (ii) Interview with Principal & suspension
- (iii) Parents/carers formally notified

## LEVEL 3

Mobile phone is seen and/or in use during school hours – 3<sup>rd</sup> incident

- (i) Teacher sends student to front office to hand in phone, which is labelled and stored in the strong room until returned by Principal
- (ii) 'Off & Away' slip is given to student to hand to class teacher, with a meeting with Deputy Principal to return phone and formal caution of suspension
- (iii) Parents/carers formally notified

## LEVEL 2

Mobile phone is seen and/or in use during school hours – 2<sup>nd</sup> incident in current term

- (i) Teacher sends student to front office to hand in phone, which is labelled and stored in the strong room until collection by the parent/carer
- (ii) 'Off & Away' slip is given to student to take back to the teacher.
- (iii) Front Office staff enter incident on Sentral as a 2<sup>nd</sup> warning, with a notification to parents/carers via email/parent portal.
- (iv) If student fails to comply with direction to go to front office, teacher is to report incident to HT/AP, who will make a parent/carer notification of non-compliance

## LEVEL 1

Mobile phone is seen and/or in use during school hours – 1<sup>st</sup> incident in current term

- (i) Teacher sends student to front office to hand in phone, which is labelled and stored in the strong room until the end of the school day
- (ii) 'Off & Away' slip is given to student to take back to the teacher.
- (iii) Front Office enters negative entry on Sentral with a notification to parents/carers via email/parent portal.
- (iv) If student fails to comply with direction to go to front office, teacher is to report incident to HT/AP, who will make a parent/carer notification of non-compliance

## LEVEL 0

Mobile phone is switched off and stored in school bag during school hours (8.30-3.00) - **No consequences**