



Guidelines for the acceptable use of mobile phones, smartwatches, digital devices and online services

Purpose and scope

These guidelines outline our school’s approach to managing student use of mobile phones, smartwatches, digital devices and online services to ensure their safe, responsible and respectful use. It covers student use of mobile phones, smartwatches, digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including both school-provided and personal devices and services.

Digital devices and online services are an important part of everyday life, shaping the way children and young people learn, communicate, work and play. Learning environments should support students to develop technological, social and emotional competencies. This support should maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school.

Our school’s core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions. As always at Ironbark Ridge, our goal is to guide the learning and personal growth of our students as they develop knowledge, habits, skills and values to be successful in all areas of life. These guidelines seek to clarify the responsibilities of staff, parents/carers and students regarding the use of mobile phones, smartwatches, digital devices and online services.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Digital devices	Include mobile phones, laptops, tablets, wearable technology (such as smartwatches and headphones) and other devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services
Educational purposes	any use approved by school staff that supports student learning, wellbeing and educational outcomes
Online services	include digital classrooms, chat and messaging, online games, virtual reality, interactive online learning activities, social media and other online spaces
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, such as excursions and camps.

Our school approach



Guidelines for mobile phone and smartwatch use at school.

Ironbark Ridge Public School (IRPS) discourages students from bringing mobile phones and smartwatches to school. However, it is recognised that parents may feel it is necessary for their child to have a mobile phone or smartwatch for communication before or after school. The decision to provide a mobile phone or smartwatch for their child should be made by parents or carers who should be aware that their child is bringing a mobile phone to school. It is the responsibility of the student to abide by the appropriate use guidelines as outlined in this document. These guidelines support the Department of Education (DoE) policies [Student use of mobile phones in schools \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/education-policy/student-use-of-mobile-phones-in-schools) and [Digital devices and online services for students \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/education-policy/digital-devices-and-online-services-for-students)

For safety, it is advisable that all mobile phones and smartwatches are handed in at the school office at the beginning of the school day and collected by the student at the end of the day.

Students are advised that if they bring a mobile phone or smartwatch onto school grounds, and if they choose not to hand them in at the school office, then mobile phones must be off or on aeroplane mode and put away in their school bag for the duration of the school day. Smartwatches must only be used for telling the time during the day. All communication functions, apps, sounds and haptics must be disabled, and unable to be accessed during the school day.

At the completion of the school day, students are permitted to use their mobile phone or smartwatch once they have left the school grounds and are no longer under the supervision of IRPS teachers.

The school accepts no responsibility for lost or damaged devices. Students are not permitted to take their mobile phone or smartwatch on school excursions, events or overnight camps. In instances where students need to contact their parents, this will be organised by school staff.

Parents/carers should not contact students directly on their devices whilst they are at school.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, or for any other communication that is necessary throughout the school day (such as changes to pick up routine) the school office remains the vital and appropriate point of contact. Office staff will ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.

Parents/carers are reminded that they are not to share the personal information of students other than their own without the express permission of their parents. This includes photos of students taken on excursions or at school events.

Using digital devices and online services for educational purposes

Ironbark Ridge Public School supports the use of digital devices (laptops, iPads and headphones) for educational purposes. Teachers use laptops, iPads and headphones and online services in the classroom to:

- structure learning and make it more engaging for students
- help students become independent learners
- support a range of learners and interests
- provide opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving

Our school helps students understand how to be good digital citizens – to be respectful (understand online behaviour and its effects), responsible (think critically and be digitally aware) and safe (protect security, privacy and wellbeing).

Inappropriate use of digital devices and online services

In line with DoE policy, [Student behaviour \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au), students who use mobile phones, smartwatches or online services inappropriately may result in the following actions:

- communication with parents/ carers regarding inappropriate mobile phone, smartwatch or online services use at school
- temporary confiscation of mobile phone or smartwatch to the school office, and parents requested to come and pick it up
- loss of privileges to keep a mobile phone or smartwatch in their bag/ on their person. The student may be required to hand in their device or watch to the school office each morning and pick it up at the end of the day
- a student's permission to bring a mobile phone or smartwatch to school being revoked

If students repeatedly engage in inappropriate activities, using the school's ICT network on digital devices, including those that result in copyright infringement, then the school or department may suspend ICT network access privileges.

Medical or wellbeing exemptions to digital device use

Where there are medical or wellbeing concerns for students, parents/carers and school support staff can request an exemption from these school guidelines. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted at the principal's discretion.

Reasonable adjustments for students with disability

Some students require reasonable adjustments to their learning and support needs under the Disability Standards for Education 2005. A disability may include a medical condition impacting a student.

Learning and support staff, with the support of the principal, will consult, as appropriate, the student, and their parents or carers, and any external service providers as needed, in determining the adjustments for the student. Reasonable adjustments may include access to digital technologies to participate in the education on the same basis as a student without disability. This may need to be documented as part of an existing student learning plan, as determined by the principal.

Our communication approach

Teachers will discuss these guidelines with students to ensure they have a clear understanding of the updated procedures.

Students will also have a chance to provide feedback through the student leadership team and student representative council.

Parents and carers will be informed:

- through the school newsletter
- on the school website [Home - Ironbark Ridge Public School \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au)
- through the SchoolBytes parent portal
- through P&C meetings

Upon enrolment, parents will be asked to sign the Acceptable Use Agreement for mobile phone and smartwatch use at school.



Handling complaints

If a student, and parent or carer has any complaints relating to this strategy, the first step is to follow the school's complaints process. If the issue cannot be resolved, they should access the [Making a complaint about our schools](#) guide.

The department's [Complaints Handling](#) policy also provides further information and support for both the school community and staff.

Related Policies

[Student use of mobile phones in schools \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Digital devices and online services for students \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

[Student behaviour \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Changes since previous update

Last updated	Description of changes	Approved by
18/09/2024	Guidelines updated for implementation in Term 4, 2024.	Nick Thomson
04/02/2025	Guidelines updated for implementation in Term 1, 2025.	Nick Thomson