

Merimbula Public School

Excellence ~ Opportunity ~ Success

Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedures



RATIONALE:

It is recognised by the Department Of Education, and its employees, that students should behave in a safe, responsible and respectful manner when using digital devices and online services for educational purposes. Merimbula Public School has developed a school 'Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services' procedure, in consultation with school community members, in order to ensure:

- The welfare and safety of all students;
- A climate of respect is maintained;
- Students are safe, responsible and respectful users of digital devices and online services, and support their peers to do the same;
- Respect and that students 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 in the ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students, and that;
- Children are safe, secure and free from bullying, harassment, victimisation, intimidation racism and discrimination.

AIMS:

This procedure guides student use of digital devices (including smart watches) and online services at our school.

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.

The aim of this procedure document is for students to be able to participate in a safe, secure, quality learning environment where they are treated equitably and with dignity and respect.

SCOPE:

These procedures provide 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 and 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. This procedure covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services.

PROCESS:

At Merimbula Public School, digital education devices are available for all students to use at times designated as appropriate by classroom teachers and/or the Principal. Student mobile phones and Smart Watches/devices are **NOT** to be used at school at any time. Student mobile phones and Smart Watches/devices **MUST** be handed in to the office (where they are stored securely in a device storage tower) whilst on site. Please note that the school will not be responsible for the loss or damage of any devices brought onsite. Students who use their mobile phone, Smart watch, smart device, or who are found with it on their person during school time (including during excursions) will be breaching the school's Discipline Procedures. School staff are required to manage and report incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services in accordance with school procedure, departmental policy and any statutory and regulatory obligations to help prevent any further incidents and provide support where required. This includes breaches of the school's Discipline Procedures when offsite, such as, in the instance of cyberbullying that may impact a student's wellbeing.

Students that do not adhere to the School Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedures will receive a Formal Caution to Suspend in accord with our Procedures.

During school hours, parents and carers are expected to contact their children via the School Administration Office as mobile devices are not accessible during school hours.

EXEMPTIONS:

As per the Department of Education's [*Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Policy*](#) which provides advice to NSW public school communities on managing student use of digital devices and online services, primary school students must not use digital devices of any kind during class, at recess or lunch unless approved by a principal (or teacher as delegated by the Principal). Exemptions may be granted by a principal or teacher, including allowing students to use a device for an educational purpose, or as part of a reasonable adjustment (such as for monitoring blood sugar levels for students with diabetes). Exemptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion. If students require mobile devices, they will be provided with a Mobile/Smart Device Agreement to sign with their parents.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE PRINCIPAL AND STAFF:

The Merimbula Public School Principal and staff members are expected to participate in the development of the *School Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedures* and to support its effective implementation. Furthermore, all staff are expected to:

- 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.
- 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.
 - Following the school's Support and Behaviour Management Plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services.
- If feasible, and 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 appropriate use of digital devices and online services.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS:

Merimbula Public School should support students to use digital/smart devices and online services in a safe, responsible and respectful manner and encourage students to:

- 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, and;
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Student Discipline Procedures.

Schools have been given the authority to determine how they enforce the ban and respond to any breaches. At Merimbula Public School, students who do not hand their phone in to the front office, and have it with them on site, will be recorded as having breached the Department Ban and school Behaviour Code/Procedures. Students will receive a Formal Caution and will have one break session in the Reflections Room to discuss their breach. Students who use their mobile phone/Smart device during school hours will receive a Formal Caution, in addition to support in the Reflections Room. Should students use a mobile

Phone/Smart devices on site a second time, they may be suspended. Students who repeatedly fail to hand in their mobile phone/Smart device will receive a Formal Caution for continued disobedience, in line with the school's Discipline Policy. Students who are deemed responsible enough to have a mobile phone/Smart device need to demonstrate that responsibility by adhering to Department of Education Policy and School Discipline Procedures. Students photographing/filming others without their/the principals consent may be suspended instantly.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS:

Parents are expected to support the school in the implementation of the school Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure. This includes visiting parents, carers and parent helpers adhering to the procedures' aims and expectations outlined in the School Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure. Parents are required to:

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services;
- Support the implementation of the school procedures, including its approach to resolving issues;
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home, such as, use of online services with age and content restrictions;
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively as outlined in the School Community Charter, and;
- Switch off or put their digital devices on silent when at official school functions, during meetings and when assisting in the classroom/at school.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be evaluated annually in consultation with staff, students, the P&C and school community. *Implemented: 2023; Current update: March 5, 2025.*



Education

For further information please contact:
The Principal: Mrs Michelle Huddleston
Merimbula Public School, Main Street, Merimbula NSW 2548
T (02) 6495 1266
Email: merimbula-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
www.merimbula-p.school.nsw.edu.au