



Umina Beach Public School Acceptable Use of Mobile phones (and similar devices) Policy and procedures

PURPOSE

This document guides student use of mobile phones (and similar devices including smart watches or cameras) at our school. The use of mobile phones in schools should not automatically be of concern. It is only if a mobile phone is used inappropriately that action may be necessary. Whilst there are potential benefits related to mobile phones, including increased connectivity and accessibility, mobile phones at school can be disruptive to learning and may cause harm, if used inappropriately. Umina Beach Public School has developed policy and procedures related to acceptable student use of mobile devices at school to assist our students to use mobile phones (and similar devices) in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

Umina Beach Public School acknowledges that students may need to be in possession of a mobile telephone at school for reasons relating to their safety **when travelling to and from school**. Whilst students may use their mobile phones whilst travelling to and from school, all students must agree to and abide by related department policy such as the *Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedures* as well as this governing policy and process document whilst at school.

SCOPE

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones and related devices 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 mobile phones and related devices 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 also sets out conditions and expectations relating to students using mobile phones to take photographs or videos while at school (or engaged in school-related activities). For the purposes of this document, 'mobile phone' also includes all other similar devices including smart watches or cameras.

Current Emergency Contact procedures:

This document aligns with current emergency contact procedures at Umina Beach Public School, which are in place to provide the most effective and reliable means of communicating important information with minimal impact to the student learning environment. Current emergency contact procedures require parents or caregivers to call the school's main office and a message will be sent to the student. If the message is important but not an emergency, the parent may email the school or email the class teacher.

If a student needs to make emergency contact with anyone they must do so through the school's main office, not from a personal mobile device. Where a significant incident or emergency arises, students must seek support and assistance from a staff member who may decide that, based on circumstances, the use of the student's mobile phone is an acceptable means of communicating with family members. In such cases, the teacher may be required to speak to the parent on behalf of the student.

Acceptable use of mobile phones at school:

This procedure reflects the NSW Department of Education's definition of "appropriate use" of mobile phones, which includes:

- Keeping mobile phones switched off or on silent mode and storing in school bag whilst at school;
- Seeking permission from a teacher should they need to make or receive phone calls of an urgent nature during the course of the day;
- Checking phone once or twice a day (whilst getting lunch or recess or at the end of the school day) to check for messages that may have been sent by parent;
- Using mobile phones in a way that respects the privacy of others and does not cause harm, distress, embarrassment or interfere with the learning environment or the operation of the school.

Unacceptable use of mobile phones at school:

This procedure reflects the NSW Department of Education's definition of "inappropriate use" of mobile phones, which includes:

- using it in a way that disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school;
- bullying, intimidating or harassing others through SMS or text messaging, including sexting or through photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone;
- recording of conversations, including lessons, without the knowledge and permission of the teacher or those involved in the conversation;
- downloading or otherwise accessing inappropriate material on the internet such as child abuse or pornographic or other offensive material;
- filming of fights or other criminal behaviour involving students that occur at school, during school activities or while on the way to or from school;
- using it in a way that threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of any person;
- use that is in breach of any law.

In line with NSW Department of Education policy and procedures, if students use mobile phones inappropriately at school, principals have the right to take action. Depending on the circumstances, action can include:

- time-out, revision of expectations and conditions of use
- students being directed to hand in their mobile phones to be stored in the office and collected at the end of the day (by student or parent, depending on circumstances)
- applying student disciplinary provisions, including formal caution, suspension or other appropriate disciplinary measure as determined by the school's discipline policy.
- reporting the matter to the police.
- Use of a Yonder Pouch to support the student to use their phone in accordance with the conditions set out in this document.

Examples of acceptable and unacceptable phone use at Umina Beach Public School including possible consequences are included in Appendix 3.

Confiscating a student's phone:

If school staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has inappropriate material on his or her phone, they may confiscate the phone for the purpose of confirming the existence of the material. Any viewing of the material should be undertaken in the presence of the student and should be limited to establishing that inappropriate material is on the phone. Staff need to be sensitive to other personal information of the student that may also be present on the phone. It is appropriate to confiscate phones from students when:

- it is necessary to examine the phone when there are reasonable grounds to suspect inappropriate material may be on the phone
- material that falls within the meaning of sexting is found on the phone
the phone has been used to record fights or other criminal activity involving students occurring at a school, during school activities or on the way to, or from, the school.

If video recordings of fights or other criminal or potential criminal activity are located on a student's phone, principals need to consider whether the nature of the material recorded warrants reporting to the police in addition to any potential action under the school student discipline policy.

CONDITIONS OF USE:

The following **Conditions of Use** align with the responsibilities and obligations of students, staff and parents at Umina Beach Public School (**Appendix 1**) and the NSW Department of Education Behaviour Code for Students (**Appendix 2**). **To retain the privilege of using a mobile phone at school, students and parents must agree to, and abide by, the following conditions of use:**

1. Parents must read, agree to, sign and return the attached agreement to allow their child to have a mobile phone at school. Both parents and students agree to the conditions of use.
2. The parent and/or student takes full responsibility for mobile devices at school. School/staff will not be responsible for their loss, theft or damage, either at school or travel to and from school, or for investigating loss or damage. Students bring phones to school at their own risk.

3. Students must not use mobile phones or other devices to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school.
4. Students must not use mobile phones or other devices to threaten, bully, intimidate or harass others through SMS or text message, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone or for any illegal activity.
5. Students must not share personal, private or confidential material or a virus or other harmful software.
6. Once at school, phones/devices are to be turned off or on silent and kept in bags while students are in class so as not to disrupt the learning environment.
7. Students are permitted to turn phones on to check for messages from parents whilst getting lunch or recess from their bags, then immediately turn off and place back into their bag. Students are not permitted to reply to texts or initiate texts/calls unless they have secured teacher approval. All other mobile phone apps or services are not be used at school. Parents may wish to consider use of a parental app to ensure this condition is applied.
8. If a breach of conditions of use occurs more than once in a day, the student will need to hand their device to the teacher. The device will be stored in the school office where it will remain until picked up by the student at the end of the school day. In the case of a major incident relating to phone use, the device will remain in the office until parents can collect it. In the case where inappropriate phone use requires police investigation, the device will remain at school until investigations are concluded. Parents will be advised in this case.
9. Students must not lend phones to other students to use whilst at school. The student who owns the phone will be held responsible for its use. Students are to keep phones locked and must not share passwords or other personal information with others. Students must tell a teacher if a student asks them to share or post personal or school information.
10. Students must tell a teacher immediately if they find online content that relates to students, staff or Umina Beach Public School. Students must immediately report any information that has been sent or shared by device that is suspicious, harmful, abusive, derogatory, inappropriate or makes them uncomfortable.
11. If unwell or injured at school, students must immediately tell a teacher. Students are not to use their device to communicate such information to parents.
12. Parents must ring the school, should an important message be communicated to their child, such as changes to home travel plans. This message will be relayed by front office to the student. This is the most reliable form of parent-child communication.
13. Students must not take videos/photos/sound recordings at school and must not transmit, post or publish: photos, video, sound recordings or information relating to school, staff or students.
14. In line with department of education policy, if school staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has inappropriate material on their phone, they may confiscate and inspect a student's mobile device for the purpose of confirming the existence of inappropriate material (see below).

Exemptions:

Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances. Parents and carers can request an exemption and apply for a Mobile Phone Pass. This may be for health, safety or family circumstances. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion. Dependent on need and individual circumstances, these passes may cover a short period of time or remain in use for the length of the school year.

In the case where parents have requested and received special exemption for their child to access their phone at school, the child will be issued with a Mobile Phone Pass card. This card will include details including student name, mobile phone number, date issued and expiry date. In the case where a Mobile Phone Pass card expires yet is still required, parents must re-apply in writing. Mobile Phone Passes are to remain with the child. Students may be asked by staff to show their mobile phone pass.

If a mobile phone is in the possession of a student who cannot show their pass when asked, if the pass has expired, or if the pass belongs to another student, the child will be asked to hand their phone in to the office where it will be stored until student collection at the end of the day.

Supporting students to engage in acceptable use of mobile phones at Umina Beach Public School:

Supporting students to use digital devices and online services in safe, responsible and respectful ways is a shared responsibility.

Teachers will support students to use mobile phones at school in an acceptable way by explicitly reviewing and explaining the information presented in this document as well as teaching expected behaviours and making clear the consequences for inappropriate use of mobile phones at school.

School leaders will ensure there are strong processes in place to ensure policy and procedures related to the acceptable use of mobile phones at school are taught fairly, consistently and thoroughly by all staff and that teachers regularly reiterate expectations for all students.

Parents and carers will read through the responsibilities set out for students, parents/carers and UBPS staff and discuss this in detail with their child, before signing the Parent/Carer Student Mobile Phone Agreement. Parents and carers understand that, by signing this agreement, they have a responsibility to work with the school to support their child to follow the conditions of use set out in this document and support implementation of related school process, including its approach to resolving issues or consequences for non-compliance.

INTRODUCTION AND REINFORCEMENT OF THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF MOBILE PHONES POLICY:

Teachers will discuss this policy with classes upon ratification. Should incidents arise where students are inappropriately using mobile phones at school, such behaviour will be addressed in terms of the policy, thereby reinforcing the policy. The community will be made aware of the policy in the newsletter and through regular communication. The policy will be published on the website and a hard copy of this document will be provided for all new enrolments.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure and the accompanying UBPS Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy will be reviewed annually, so that all members of the school community are aware of and remain committed to it. The procedure will reflect current teaching and learning practices of the school. The review will provide opportunities for reflection and renewal.

Umina Beach Public School will develop and implement a revised procedure, if necessary, following review. Staff, students and the community will be provided with opportunities to monitor and evaluate the implementation of mobile phone use procedures on an annual basis.

COMMUNICATING THIS PROCEDURE TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY:

This procedure will be communicated to students at the beginning of each school year by their class teacher as well as during their first session in the computer lab with the Computers RFF Teacher.

Parents and carers can find this procedure on our school website. Alternatively, they can access a hard copy of the document upon making an enquiry to the office. Parents and carers will be advised by the school newsletter of the procedure at the beginning of each school year.

COMPLAINTS:

If a student, parent or carer has a concern or complaint under this procedure, they should first follow our school's complaint process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the department's guide for students/ parents/ carers about making a complaint about our schools.

RELATED NSW DEPARTMENTAL DOCUMENTS/POLICIES:

Social Media Policy

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/social-media-policy?refid=285859>

Student Use of Digital devices and Online Services

<https://policies.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2020-0471?refid=285859>

DATE RATIFIED BY SCHOOL P&C:

Appendix 1: RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS: Students, parents and staff

For students:

- Be safe, responsible, respectful users of mobile phones/similar devices and support their peers to be the same.
- Abide by the conditions of use, follow staff directions and accept related consequences.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community, behave in ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students (see Appendix).

For parents and carers:

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones and similar devices.
- Support implementation of the school procedure, including its approach to resolving issues or consequences for non-compliance with school procedures, as well as ensuring all messages are communicated via the office (unless student has signed exemption).
- Take responsibility for their child's use of mobile devices at home, such as use of online services with age and content restrictions.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively.
- Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience a problem or issue at school.
- Acknowledge that device confiscation, suspension and police investigation are possible consequences for non-compliance.
- Sign and return the Parent/Carer Mobile Phone Agreement (attached with this document).

For principal and teachers:

- Provide learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones and similar devices. This includes establishing agreed classroom expectations for using mobile phones and educating students about privacy, intellectual property, copyright, digital literacy and other safety-related issues.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones, in line with departmental policy.
- Respond to and report any breaches/incidents of inappropriate use of mobile phones as required by school procedures, departmental policy and statutory or 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 bullying and image-based abuse.
 - 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 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 mobile phones.

For non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors

- Be aware of department's policy, this procedure and act in accordance whilst at school.
- Report any inappropriate use of mobile phones to the principal, executive or staff they are working with.

Appendix 2: NSW Department of Education Behaviour code for students

NSW Department of Education

Behaviour code for students

NSW public schools

NSW public schools are committed to providing safe, supportive and responsive learning environments for everyone. We teach and model the behaviours we value in our students.

In NSW public schools students are expected to:

- Respect other students, their teachers and school staff and community members
- Follow school and class rules and follow the directions of their teachers
- Strive for the highest standards in learning
- Respect all members of the school community and show courtesy to all students, teachers and community members
- Resolve conflict respectfully, calmly and fairly
- Comply with the school's uniform policy or dress code
- Attend school every day (unless legally excused)
- Respect all property
- Not be violent or bring weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco into our schools
- Not bully, harass, intimidate or discriminate against anyone in our schools

Schools take strong action in response to behaviour that is detrimental to self or others or to the achievement of high quality teaching and learning.

Behaviour Code for Students: Actions

Promoting the learning, wellbeing and safety of all students in NSW Public Schools is a high priority for the Department of Education.

We implement teaching and learning approaches to support the development of skills needed by students to meet our high standards for respectful, safe and engaged behaviour.

Respect

- Treat one another with dignity
- Speak and behave courteously
- Cooperate with others
- Develop positive and respectful relationships and think about the effect on relationships before acting
- Value the interests, ability and culture of others
- Dress appropriately by complying with the school uniform or dress code
- Take care with property

Safety

- Model and follow departmental, school and/or class codes of behaviour and conduct
- Negotiate and resolve conflict with empathy
- Take personal responsibility for behaviour and actions
- Care for self and others
- Avoid dangerous behaviour and encourage others to avoid dangerous behaviour

Engagement

- Attend school every day (unless legally excused)
- Arrive at school and class on time
- Be prepared for every lesson
- Actively participate in learning
- Aspire and strive to achieve the highest standards of learning

The principal and school staff, using their professional judgment, are best placed to maintain discipline and provide safe, supportive and responsive learning environments. The department provides a policy framework and resources such as Legal Issues Bulletins, access to specialist advice, and professional learning to guide principals and their staff in exercising their professional judgment. In this context the NSW Government and the Department of Education will back the authority and judgment of principals and school staff at the local level.



ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR



Phone off or on silent during school hours



Phone stays in bag



Student discreetly checks phone whilst getting lunch / recess from bag



Student asks permission to send/respond to a parent message



Student alerts teacher if he/she receives a notice /message /image / media from another student that does not align with school policy

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES



Soaring Seagull



Dojo points



Positive reinforcement and praise

Examples & possible consequences of acceptable mobile phone use at UBPS



MINOR NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR



Student has their mobile phone on them (without approved mobile pass)



Phone not off or not on silent



Texting or making calls without teacher permission

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES



Participate in a lesson to review expectations (in own time) - Incident recorded



Work with teacher to review contract (in own time) - Incident recorded



Phone handed in to office - student to collect at the end of the day - Incident recorded & parents informed via email



Proactive parent meeting to co-construct behaviour plan to promote acceptable phone use at school

Examples & possible consequences of unacceptable mobile phone use at UBPS



MAJOR NEGATIVE BEHAVIOUR



Showing and/or sharing inappropriate material (derogatory comments, intimidation or material that upsets or offends)



Taking, sharing or uploading videos/photos/recordings relating to staff, students or school



Downloading or accessing inappropriate/offensive material incl. pornographic material



Taking or sharing videos/filming fights or other criminal behaviour involving students or school members)



Using phone to threaten the safety/wellbeing of others or use in a way that is in breach of a law

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES



Time out/loss of privilege



Phone handed in to office: parent to pick-up



Police called to investigate serious concern



Formal caution or suspension



Student behaviour contract: may include use of Yonder Pouch

Examples & possible consequences of unacceptable mobile phone use at UBPS

Please read, sign and return the Umina Beach Public School Parent/Carer and Student Mobile Phone Agreement on the following pages



Umina Beach Public School

Sydney Avenue
Umina Beach NSW 2257
Phone: (02) 4341 1630
Fax: (02) 4344 3916
Email: umina-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

A member
of the



Umina Beach Public School Parent/Carer and Student Mobile Phone Agreement (p1)

I have read and understand the information provided within this document regarding appropriate use of mobile phones (and similar devices) at Umina Beach Public School. I have discussed this in detail with my child and I agree to all conditions of use set out in this document. By ticking the boxes below, I indicate understanding and consent:

- Both myself and my child will sign and return this Mobile Phone Agreement, agreeing to all conditions of use. I understand that this document will remain on file at school.
- Both myself and my child will take full responsibility for their mobile phone, including loss, theft or damage (either at school or in travel to and from school), and bring this device to school at own risk.
- My child will keep phone off or on silent and in bag whilst at school.
- My child will not use their device to threaten, bully, intimidate or otherwise harass others
- My child will not share personal, private or confidential material or virus/harmful software.
- My child will only check phone whilst getting recess/lunch from bag.
- My child will only send text/make call after asking the teacher first.
- My child will not access social media apps during school time.
- My child agrees to the consequences of unacceptable phone behaviour, including handing in phone to a teacher if requested, for collection from the office.
- My child understands that non-compliance with this agreement may result in suspension.
- My child will not lend mobile phone to other students whilst at school.
- My child will keep their mobile phone locked and will not share password with others.
- My child will report to a teacher if a student asks them to share/upload personal information, information about another student or school information
- My child (or myself, on behalf of my child) will report to a teacher if they discover content that relates to students, staff or Umina Beach Public School.
- My child (or myself, on behalf of my child) will immediately report any information that has been sent or shared by mobile that is suspicious, harmful, abuse, derogatory, inappropriate or makes them uncomfortable.
- (or myself, on behalf of my child) will not transmit, post or publish photos, video or sound recordings taken at school without the express permission of a teacher.
- Both myself and my child understand that, In line with department of education policy, if school staff have reasonable grounds to suspect that a student has inappropriate material on their phone, they may confiscate and inspect a student's mobile device for the purpose of confirming the existence of inappropriate material.



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Umina Beach Public School Parent/Carer and Student Mobile Phone Agreement (p2)

In signing and returning this document, I give my child permission to carry a mobile phone (or similar device) to school and understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile phone is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

Both myself and my child understand and agree to abide by defined possible consequences for inappropriate mobile phone use whilst at school, as set out in this document.

Parent name: _____
Parent signature: _____ Date: _____
Student name: _____ Class: _____
Student signature: _____ Date: _____
Student mobile phone number: _____