



## **Use of laptops, mobile phones and other devices by students - Merrimac SHS Policy -**

### **Important to note:**

For the purpose of this document, *mobile phones and wearable devices* include mobile phones, smartwatches, ear pods, headphones, handheld devices and other emerging technologies which have the ability to connect to telecommunication networks or the internet.

Digital literacy refers to the skills needed to live, learn and work in a society where communication and access to information is dominated by digital technologies like laptops, mobile phones and smart watches. However, the benefits brought about through these diverse technologies can be easily overshadowed by deliberate misuse which harms others or disrupts learning.

Queensland State Schools are committed to reducing the distraction of mobile phones and wearable devices to provide optimal learning environments for all students.

The aims of this policy are to:

- provide optimal learning and teaching environments, free from the distractions caused by personal use of mobile phones and wearable devices
- support schools to create safe and supportive learning environments that prioritise student engagement and wellbeing
- encourage increased face-to-face social interactions between students
- promote the health and wellbeing of students by providing opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during break times, and reduce the potential for students to be exposed to the negative impacts of the digital world, resulting from unsafe or inappropriate use of technology, such as cyberbullying, accessing harmful content or breaches of personal privacy.

### **Student use of mobile phones and wearable devices at school**

- All State School students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours. Notifications on wearable devices, such as smartwatches, must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.
- This policy also applies to student attendance at school activities, such as representative school sport, excursions and camps, unless otherwise determined by the school Principal.
- Students may only use their mobile phone or have wearable device notifications enabled during these times if they have an approved exemption for medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons.
- Students participating in activities, such as off-site Vocational Education and Training or work placements must follow the expectations of the organisation in charge regarding the use of mobile devices.

In consultation with the broader school community, Merrimac SHS has determined that explicit teaching of responsible use of mobile phones and other devices is a critical component of digital literacy. The knowledge and confidence to navigate and use these technologies safely while developing digital literacy is a responsibility shared between parents, school staff and students.

It is also agreed that time and space should be provided at school where technology is not permitted, and students are encouraged to engage in other social learning and developmental activities. While students will not have access to a device during school time, they will be able to access their device under staff instruction in designated 'green zones' throughout the school. These green zones will be located in the Student Services Hub, Uniform Shop, Library, Canteen and at payment windows to enable students to make payments and access their digital ID cards to print.

Students, parents and visitors will see posters, such as the examples below; around the school that clearly identify our technology-free zones and our designated green zones. Please respect the community-agreed expectations for these spaces and behaviours.



## Exemptions

Students that have individual circumstances that dictate they must have access to their phone or device are required to apply for an exemption to this policy by contacting the Head of Inclusion.

Students with an approved exemption must only use their mobile phone or wearable device for the intended, approved purpose.



## Responsibilities

The responsibilities for students using mobile phones or other devices at school or during school activities are outlined below.

It is **acceptable** for students at Merrimac SHS to:

- use laptops or other similar devices (I-pads and tablets) at school for:
  - assigned class work and assignments set by teachers
  - developing appropriate literacy, communication and information skills
  - authoring text, artwork, audio and visual material for publication on the intranet or internet for educational purposes as supervised and approved by the school
  - conducting general research for school activities and projects
  - communicating or collaborating with other students, teachers, parents or experts in relation to school work
  - accessing online references such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.
  - researching and learning through the department's eLearning environment
  - making payments at clearly designated "green zones" within the school
- access mobile phones / digital devices as a learning tool in class time only when permitted by a teacher and when the "green zone poster" is displayed. Mobile phones and other devices but be switched off and out of site
- access mobile phones / digital devices to make payments and use a digital ID card at designated "green zones"
- be courteous, considerate and respectful of others when using a mobile device outside of school hours
- seek teacher's approval where they wish to use a mobile device under special circumstances
- seek teacher's approval to access Compass or other timetabling apps associated and approved by the school.

It is **unacceptable** for students at Merrimac SHS to:

- use a mobile phone or other devices in an unlawful manner
- use a mobile phone, ear phones or smart watches during school hours unless directed to do so by a teacher during either class or break time, or there has been prior approval given by the school in line with management of a chronic medical condition or a documented personalised learning plan
- download, distribute or publish offensive messages or pictures
- use obscene, inflammatory, racist, discriminatory or derogatory language
- use language and/or threats of violence that may amount to bullying and/or harassment, or even stalking
- insult, harass or attack others or use obscene or abusive language
- deliberately waste printing and internet resources
- damage computers, printers or network equipment
- commit plagiarism or violate copyright laws
- ignore teacher directions for the use of social media, online email and internet chat
- send chain letters or spam email (junk mail)
- knowingly download viruses or any other programs capable of breaching the department's network security
- use in-phone cameras anywhere a normal camera would be considered inappropriate, such as in change rooms, class rooms or toilets
- invade someone's privacy by recording personal conversations or daily activities and/or the further distribution (e.g. forwarding, texting, uploading, Bluetooth use etc.) of such material



- use a mobile phone (including those with Bluetooth functionality) to cheat during exams or assessments
- take into or use mobile devices at exams or during class assessment unless expressly permitted by school staff
- distribute or threaten distribution of an 'intimate image' as defined by the Criminal Code (Non-consensual Sharing of Intimate Images) Amendment Act 2019
- participate in advertising the school, students, school logo, school uniform or school buildings on social media in any form
- use a mobile device to coordinate 'meet ups' during school time
- 'Like', share or create any form of social media that negatively identifies the school, students, uniform, school name, school logo, staff or facilities in any way.

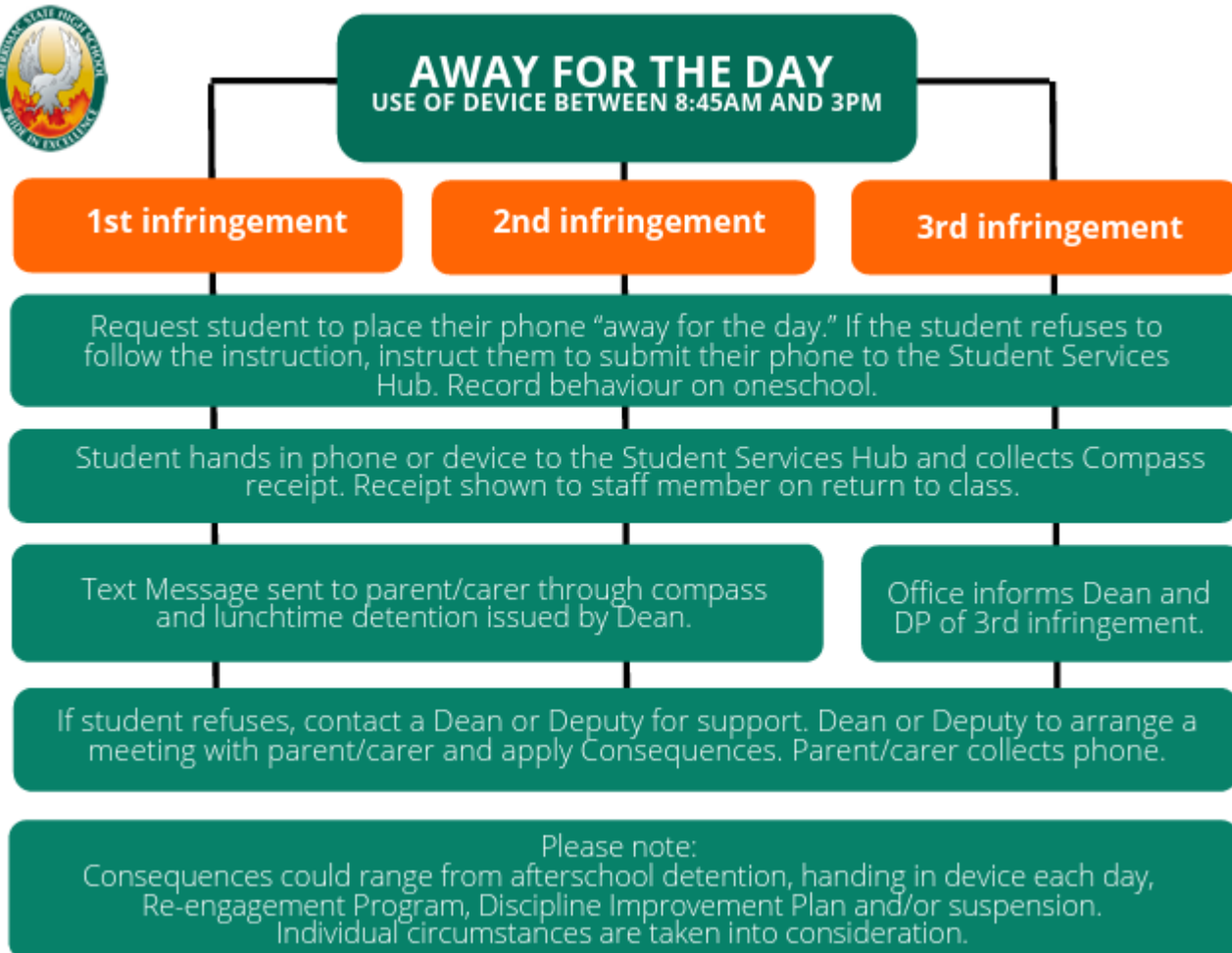
At all times students, whether using ICT facilities and devices supplied by the school, or personal devices (including mobile phones and smart watches) will be required to act in accordance with the requirements of Merrimac SHS Student Code of Conduct. In addition, students and their parents should:

- understand the responsibility and behaviour requirements (as outlined by the school) that come with accessing the department's ICT network facilities
- ensure they have the skills to report and discontinue access to harmful information if presented via the internet or email or social media platforms
- be aware that the use of programs/apps on a student's personal laptop or similar device that allows the bypassing of filters placed on the internet by Department of Education contravenes the Student Code of Conduct
- be aware that:
  - access to ICT facilities and devices provides valuable learning experiences for students and supports the school's teaching and learning programs
  - schools may remotely access departmentally-owned student computers or mobile devices for management purposes
  - students who use a school's ICT facilities and devices in a manner that is not appropriate may be subject to disciplinary action by the school, which could include restricting network access and other measures
  - despite internal departmental controls to manage content on the internet, illegal, dangerous or offensive information may be accessed or accidentally displayed
  - teachers will always exercise their duty of care, by avoiding or reducing access to harmful information also requires responsible use by the student.

**Students who are found using a banned device on school grounds, can expect the following:**

<p>1<sup>st</sup> Offence</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student is found using their phone between the times of 8:45am and 3:00pm and is requested to place their phone "away for the day." This could mean on their person (pocket) or in their bag. If the student refuses to follow the instruction or persists in using the phone after this initial instruction, they will be instructed to submit their phone to the Student Services Hub for storage until the end of the day.</li> <li>2. Student takes phone or device to Student Services Hub and hands over device. Student will be provided with a COMPASS electronic device slip to take back to class/teacher to show teacher they have handed device in to Student services building.</li> <li>3. The device will be locked in a secure locker for the day and returned at the end of the day with the receipt from the student.</li> <li>4. Text message sent to parents by Year Level Dean.</li> <li>5. Student provided with Lunchtime detention given via Deans</li> <li>6. If the student refuses to submit their phone, the Dean or Deputy will be called to discuss and significant consequences may apply.</li> </ol>
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2 <sup>nd</sup> Offence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student is found to be in breach of the policy for the second time.</li> <li>2. Follow steps 2-5 as above.</li> <li>3. If the student refuses to submit their phone, the Dean or Deputy will be called to discuss and significant consequences may apply.</li> <li>4. Year Level Dean to contact parent/carer and arrange a meeting with student, Dean and / or Deputy Principal where the confiscated device will ONLY be returned to parent/carer.</li> <li>5. A Discipline Improvement Plan (DIP) may be actioned where the student's mobile phone / device will be submitted each day to the Dean at Student Services. Other consequences (inclusive of participation in the re- engagement program "REP") may be actioned relevant to the School's Responsible Code of Behaviour.</li> </ol>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Offence (Plus)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student is found in breach of the policy for the third time.</li> <li>2. Follow steps 2-4 as above</li> <li>3. Office informs relevant Year Level Dean and Deputy Principal of third offence.</li> <li>4. In consultation with the Principal consequences will be applied (inclusive of the original "DIP") and may include external suspension.</li> </ol>



## Procedures

Mobile phones and other above-mentioned technologies used inappropriately at any time on a school day between 8:45am-3:00pm may be confiscated and stored in the Student Services safe zones for the remainder of the day. They may be retrieved from Student Services after 3.00 pm with the issued receipt (unless otherwise detailed where a parent/carer must collect the device.) Repeat offenders may lose the right to bring mobile phones to school as it is considered that they are deliberately failing to follow school rules and the Queensland Government Legislation in relation to mobile phones at school. Repeat offenders will be issued consequences (listed above) but are not limited to those consequences.





**Student Agreement:**

- I understand that the school's information and communication technology (ICT) services, facilities and devices provide me with access to a range of essential learning tools, including access to the internet. I understand that the internet can connect me to useful information around the world.
- I understand that the use of mobile phones/ ear buds and smart watches is not permitted during school hours unless I am expressly permitted by a teacher to use these devices to enhance my learning during school hours, when the green mobile phone poster is present, in 'green zone' areas designated by green lines or I have been approved by the school to do so in relation to the management of a chronic health condition or a personalised learning plan.
- While I have access to the school's ICT services, facilities and devices: I will use it only for educational purposes; I will not undertake or look for anything that is illegal, dangerous or offensive; and I will not reveal my password or allow anyone else to use my school account.
- Specifically in relation to internet usage, should any offensive information appear on my screen I will close the window and immediately inform my teacher quietly, or tell my parents/guardians if I am at home.
- If I receive any inappropriate emails or inappropriate communications via social media platforms at school, I will tell my teacher. If I receive any at home, I will tell my parents/guardians.
- When using email, social media or the internet I will not:
  - reveal names, home addresses or phone numbers – mine or that of any other person within the school community
  - share identified images or audio recordings of any member of the school community without the prior approval of the Principal
  - use the school's ICT service, facilities and devices (including the internet) to annoy or offend anyone else or to undertake criminal activity.
- I understand that my online behaviours (including the use of social media sites) are capable of impacting on the good order and management of the school whether I am using either my own or the school's ICT services, facilities and devices inside or outside of school hours.
- I understand that devices potentially containing evidence of criminal offences may be reported to the police. In such cases, police may take possession of such devices for investigation purposes and students and parents/guardians will be advised to contact the Queensland Police Services (QPS) directly. The Principal may confiscate devices for collection by QPS where necessary.
- I understand that if the school decides I have broken the rules for using its ICT services, facilities and devices, appropriate action may be taken as per the school's Student Code of Conduct, which may include loss of access to the network (including the internet) for a period of time.
- I have read and understood this policy and associated guidelines and the Student Code of Conduct.
- I agree to abide by the above rules/the procedure/policy/statement/guideline.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Student's name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Student's signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)



**Parent/Guardian Agreement:**

- I understand that the school provides my child with access to the school's information and communication technology (ICT) services, facilities and devices (including the internet) for valuable learning experiences. In regards to internet access, I understand that this will give my child access to information from around the world; that the school cannot control what is available online; and that a small part of that information can be illegal, dangerous or offensive.
- I accept that, while teachers will always exercise their duty of care, protection against exposure to harmful information should depend upon responsible use by my child. Additionally, I will ensure that my child understands and adheres to the school's appropriate behaviour requirements and will not engage in inappropriate use of the school's ICT services, facilities and devices. Furthermore, I will advise the school if any inappropriate material is received by my child that may have come from the school or from other students.
- I understand that the school is not responsible for safeguarding information stored by my child on a student computer.
- I understand that the use of my student's mobile phone / earbuds or smart watch is not permitted during school hours unless given permission to do so by a school staff member or where prior approval has been sought for use by the school to manage a chronic health condition (supported with a medical certificate) or through a school-approved personalised learning plan.
- I understand that the school may remotely access student computers or mobile device for management purposes.
- I understand that student devices potentially containing evidence of criminal offences may be reported to the police. In such cases, police may take possession of such devices for investigation purposes and students and parents/guardians will be advised to contact the Queensland Police Services (QPS) directly. The Principal may confiscate devices for collection by QPS where necessary.
- I understand that the school does not accept liability for any loss or damage suffered to personal mobile devices as a result of using the department's services, facilities and devices. Further, no liability will be accepted by the school in the event of loss, theft or damage to any mobile device unless it can be established that the loss, theft or damage resulted from the school's/department's negligence.
- I believe \_\_\_\_\_ (name of student) understands this responsibility, and I hereby give my permission for him/her to access and use the school's ICT services, facilities and devices (including the internet) under the school rules. I understand where inappropriate online behaviours negatively affect the good order and management of the school, the school may commence disciplinary actions in line with this user agreement or the Student Code of Conduct. This may include loss of access and usage of the school's ICT services, facilities and devices for some time.
- I have read and understood this procedure/policy/statement/guideline and the Student Code of Conduct.
- I agree to abide by the above rules / the procedure/policy/statement/guideline.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian's name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian's signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date)



## **Information privacy and right to information procedure**

The Department of Education through its Information privacy and right to information procedure is collecting your personal information in accordance with the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) in order to ensure:

- appropriate usage of the school network
- appropriate usage of personal mobile devices within the school network.

The information will only be accessed by authorised school employees to ensure compliance with its Information privacy and right to information procedure. Personal information collected on this form may also be disclosed to third parties where authorised or required by law. Your information will be stored securely. If you wish to access or correct any of the personal information on this form or discuss how it has been dealt with, please contact your child's school. If you have a concern or complaint about the way your personal information has been collected, used, stored or disclosed, please also contact your child's school.