

Mobile Phone and Wearable Technology Guidelines

Statement:

Inspired by our Franciscan values of peace, love, and acceptance, we strive to create an environment where all students can flourish spiritually, academically, and socially. Our guidelines for mobile phone and wearable technology use reflect our commitment to fostering resilience, participation, diversity, a sense of belonging, and a passion for lifelong learning.

We believe that technology, when used responsibly, can enrich our learning community while respecting the dignity of all individuals. By aligning these guidelines with our mission, we aim to develop a culture of mindful technology use that nurtures personal growth, strengthens relationships, and supports the common good.

At the heart of our school is the belief that classrooms are sacred spaces of teaching and learning, where students engage deeply with their studies, build meaningful friendships, and develop their God-given potential. To protect this sense of focus and connection, we encourage students to embrace balance, self-discipline, and consideration for others, ensuring that our school remains a place of harmony, inclusivity, and shared purpose in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi.

As staff of St Francis Catholic Primary School, we too adhere to our Code of Conduct and ICT Code of Practice regarding expectations of mobile phones. We aim to model respectful and responsible technology use in alignment with the values that guide our school community.

Expectations and Implementations:

Personal communication devices include (but are not limited to) items such as mobile phones, electronic tablets, and smartwatches or wearables. These devices are not to be used by students during school hours. While we understand that such devices can provide a sense of safety and security while travelling to and from school, they can also distract from learning, disrupt classroom focus, and potentially impede the development of healthy friendships and social interactions during the school day.

To support a positive learning environment and ensure the safety and privacy of all stakeholders, the following guidelines apply:

- **Device Storage:** Mobile phones and Wi-Fi-capable devices must be turned off or placed in silent mode and handed into the school office before the 8:25am bell. Devices may be collected after the 2:45pm bell.
- **Wearable Devices:** Smartwatches and other wearables with messaging, internet, or Bluetooth capabilities must also be handed into the school office during school hours. While we acknowledge that some devices can be placed into modes such as “parent mode”, there is a risk that these settings may not be consistently applied. To ensure fairness and minimise distractions, all such devices must be handed in.
- **School Devices:** Onsite school-issued devices, used during class time, are to be operated responsibly and only for educational purposes, in accordance with Catholic Education’s ICT Code of Practice.
- **Parental Monitoring:** Parents are encouraged to carefully monitor and support their child’s use of electronic communication outside of school hours.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen, or damaged devices. The school reserves the right to check a student's bag if there is reason to believe a device has not been handed into the office as required.

Non-Compliance

Students who do not adhere to these guidelines will face the following consequences:

1. **Confiscation of Device:** The mobile phone or wearable device will be confiscated, secured in the front office, and the student's parent(s) will be informed. Parent(s) may collect the device at their convenience.
2. **Disciplinary Action:** In cases of repeated non-compliance or inappropriate behaviour, the Principal may apply disciplinary action. This may include withdrawing the student's permission to bring a mobile phone or wearable device to school for a set period or permanently.
3. **Mandatory Reporting:** In line with our mandatory reporting obligations, the school will take appropriate action if any student is found engaging in illegal activities.

We trust that families will support these guidelines as a shared responsibility to ensure our classrooms remain places of focused teaching and learning, and our playgrounds spaces for joyful friendships and connection. Together, we can nurture a culture of respect, balance, and thoughtful technology use within our school community.

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