



Rationale

When used appropriately, mobile phones offer students, their parents and staff advantages in terms of ease of communication and a sense of personal safety.

Tathra Public School accepts that some parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety; however, mobile phones have the capacity to have a negative impact on the learning environment and when used inappropriately can put the safety and well being of students at risk. The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that the staff, students and parents at Tathra PS take steps to ensure mobile phones are used in a responsible and safe manner.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- mobile phone use does not disrupt the teaching and learning environment for any student or teacher;
- potential risks to student safety and well-being posed by inappropriate use of mobile phones can be identified and addressed;
- students, staff and parents have a clear understanding of school guidelines and personal responsibilities related to the appropriate use of mobile phones.

Responsibility

In the instance that parents feel it is necessary for their child to have a phone in their possession at school, it is the responsibility of the student to abide by the appropriate use guidelines outlined in this document.

- The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or guardians who should be aware that their child is bringing a mobile phone to school.
- Permission for students to have a mobile phone at school is contingent on parents and students signing the *Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones at School Agreement*.
- The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged phones in the instance that they have not been signed in. The school also accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their phones stolen whilst travelling to and from school.



Guidelines for Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones

- Students are only permitted to bring a mobile phone to school once the *Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones at School Agreement* has been co-signed by the parent and student.
- All students are to be made aware of the unacceptable uses of mobile phones to ensure they have a clear understanding of what is and is not appropriate.
- Mobile phones should be switched off as soon as students enter the school grounds.
- All mobile phones are to be handed to the front office when the student arrives at school and retrieved at 3:10pm. Phones will be kept in a secure location during the school day.
- Students will only be granted permission to access their phone between their arrival and 3:10pm under exceptional circumstances. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the principal. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency or when messages need to be passed onto students the school office remains the sole point of contact and will ensure any student is contacted and assisted in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving the number to friends and family to ensure they are receiving communication from people known to them. It is strongly advised that students use passwords or pin numbers to ensure unauthorised phone calls or SMS messages cannot be made from their phone by anyone other than the owner of the phone. Students must not lend a phone to another student at any time. The student who owns the phone will be held responsible for its use.
- Students should mark their mobile phones clearly with their names.
- Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones on school excursions and overnight camps under any circumstances. School staff will not be held responsible for the security of phones should this guideline be breached. In instances where students need to contact their parents this will be organised by supervising staff.

Unacceptable Use of Mobile Phones

- Unless express permission is granted, students are not to be in the possession of a mobile phone at any time between their arrival at school and 3:10pm. Accordingly, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, access the internet, take photos or use any other application while students are on school grounds.
- Using mobile phones in an inappropriate manner is unacceptable.
- *Inappropriate uses of mobile phones include but are not limited to:*
 - using a mobile phone at a time that will disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school;
 - making calls or sending messages with the intent to bully, harass or threaten another person;
 - using mobile phones to take photographs of other people without their consent;



- using obscene, derogatory or socially unacceptable language while using a mobile phone;
- using mobile phones to receive, download and display inappropriate photographs or other material.

Consequences of Inappropriate Use of Mobile Phones

- Students who engage in inappropriate use of mobile phones will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the school's discipline policy. Some inappropriate uses can constitute criminal behaviour and will be reported to the police.

Sanctions

- Students who infringe the guidelines in this document will have their phone confiscated by school staff. The phone will then be stored securely until the student's parents are informed and arrangements are made for the parents to collect the mobile phone.
- Any infringement will result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile phone to school.

Related Technology

- Related technology such as cameras, portable computer games, iPods, iPads and other similar devices are not to be brought to school under any circumstances. The school accepts no responsibility for the security of these.
- Items and the procedures applying to the inappropriate use of mobile phones will apply equally to these devices.



Implementation of this Policy

- Teachers will discuss this policy with students to ensure they have a clear understanding of the guidelines and procedures.
- The community will be made aware of this policy through the weekly newsletter, at P&C meetings and the policy will be posted on the school's website.
- The policy will be made clear to all students and their parents seeking enrolment at Tathra Public School.

Reference

- Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association – *Developing an Acceptable Use Policy for Mobile Phones in Your School*
- NSW Department of Education and Training Policies and Procedures

Ratification and Review

- This policy was developed and ratified by the Tathra Public School staff in Term 3, 2013.
- This policy was ratified by the Tathra Public School P&C, September 9th 2013.
- The policy will be reviewed in Term 3, 2015.

Appendix

- *Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones at School Agreement*

Graham Roberts

Relieving Principal



Appropriate Use of Mobile Phones at School Agreement

Student Name: _____ **Class:** _____

Student Mobile Phone Number:

Tathra Public School accepts that some parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. However, the school has clear guidelines and procedures for the appropriate use of mobile phones as outlined in the *Tathra Public School Mobile Phone Policy*. In order for any student to bring a mobile phone onto school grounds they must have read and clearly understood the policy as well as co-signing the following agreement with their parent.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I have read the *Tathra Public School Mobile Phone Policy* and agree to the following:

- When bringing my mobile phone to school I will personally sign it in to the principal or delegate when I arrive and sign it out at 3:10pm.
- I understand and will abide by all the guidelines for **acceptable use** of mobile phones at Tathra Public School.
- I understand the behaviours that constitute **unacceptable use** of mobile phones and will not engage in these behaviours at any time. I acknowledge that if I break the terms of this agreement my phone will be confiscated, my parents will be contacted and I may be banned from bringing my phone onto school grounds.
- Student Name (print): _____
- Student Signature: _____
- Date: _____

PARENTAL AGREEMENT

I give permission for my child to carry a mobile phone to school. I have read the *Tathra Public School Mobile Phone Policy* about appropriate use of mobile phones and discussed the guidelines and procedures with my child. I agree to support school policy with regards to mobile phone use and agree to support school decisions and actions regarding mobile phones. I understand that this form will be kept on file and details may be used to assist in identifying a phone should the need arise.

Parent Name (print): _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____