



## Policy for the Use of Mobile Phones in School

### Rationale

At Ferncourt Primary School we acknowledge the issues associated with the use of mobile phones in school. These include:

- Health concerns for young children using mobile phones excessively
- The possibility of expensive phones being lost or stolen
- Safe storage of phones during the school day
- Inappropriate use of phones.

For these reasons **we discourage students from bringing mobile phones to school.** If students have a legitimate reason to phone home during the day, office staff will assist them to contact their parents. In case of emergencies parents can contact their children via the school office.

However, on occasions parents may feel their child needs to carry a mobile phone for security reasons travelling to and from school. Before allowing their child to bring a mobile phone to school parents should consider the following:

- Where will the student keep the phone for safe keeping during the day?
- Where will the student keep the phone while playing/sport?
- How will you control your child's use of the phone?

### Policy Statement

The following rules apply to students who bring mobile schools to school:

- Students bringing mobile phones to school do so at their own risk – the school does not accept any responsibility for any loss or damage to mobile phones.
- The name of the student, parental permission note and the student's mobile phone number must be registered with the office.
- Parents must notify the classroom teacher that their child has permission to have the phone at school.
- The phone is the responsibility of the student at all times unless parents request in writing that the phone be stored in the school safe during the day. (In this case it is the student's responsibility to take the phone to the office before school and collect it immediately the bell is rung at 3.25 pm.)
- Phones are to be switched off in class.

- Parents must counsel their child on the inappropriate use of mobile phones.
- The use of mobile phone cameras or videos is not permitted at school.
- Mobile phones will be confiscated if students are found to have used it inappropriately. The principal or her/his delegate will contact the student's parents to discuss the student's use of the phone.

### **Inappropriate Use of Mobile Phones**

Generally a mobile phone will be used inappropriately if it:

- Disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school, or
- Threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or wellbeing of any person, or
- Is in breach of the law.

Inappropriate use of a mobile phone includes:

- Students using their phone to bully intimidate or otherwise harass other people through any SMS or text message, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone.

If students use mobile phones inappropriately the principal and school reserves the right to take action. Depending on the circumstances, action may include any of the following:

- Banning student from using mobile phones during the course of the school day;
- Confiscating mobile phones from individual students;
- Requiring students to hand in their mobile phones to designated school staff at the beginning of the school day for collection when students go home;
- Applying student disciplinary provisions.

### **Updating of DEC Policy and Procedures**

In 2011 the Department of Education and Training (now Department of Education and Community, DEC) updated the department's policy and procedures, *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students*.

The rationale underpinning the changes is driven by the rise of social networking sites and increasing sophistication of mobile phones which has meant that bullying and harassment related to school may continue outside of school hours or off the school site.

The policy states that the school discipline code, and therefore the *Suspension and Expulsion of School Students – Procedures* have applications **outside of school hours**

**where there is a clear and close relationship between the behaviour of students and the school.**

As a result of these changes students may also be suspended for the inappropriate use of mobile phones regardless of when or where the offence occurred.

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying will be managed through the school's Anti bullying policy. In some cases disciplinary action or reporting to the NSW Police Force and the School Safety and Response Hotline will be necessary if a crime has been committed.