

Management of Student Electronic Devices at School

Introduction

In June of 2018, the NSW Minister of Education announced an independent review into the non-educational use of mobile digital devices. In December of 2018, the NSW government announced that in response to the recommendations made by the review the use of mobile devices during school hours will be restricted in NSW public primary schools, and NSW public high schools can also opt into this restriction.

Ballina Coast High School has opted into this restriction which will take effect starting Term 1 2021. The school will be utilising a system called YONDR, which utilises a pouch that is locked with a magnetic device in order to ensure mobile digital devices are not used on school grounds during the day.

New Students / Leaving Students

Once a student's enrolment is confirmed they will be assigned a YONDR pouch as required through the Learning Centre. The pouch number is unique and assigned to a particular student.

Students who leave Ballina Coast High School before completing the HSC are required to return their YONDR pouch at the time of signing out.

Normal Operating Procedures

Students are expected to use the unlocking stations each morning as they enter to unlock their pouch, turn their device off and place it inside. The pouch must remain locked throughout the day. At the end of the day, students should proceed to the unlocking stations to unlock their pouches.

Unlocking stations will only be available until 09:10 each morning. They will be secured until 15:15, when they will again be made available.

No unpouched device is permitted on school grounds once a student is on site. Student YONDR pouches should be closed and locked at all times except when adding or removing their devices at the beginning and end of the school day.

The front office will also have its own unlocking station that can be used for late arrival/early departure unlocking by staff.

All electronic devices that are not BYOD approved as per the BYOD policy are banned from school. This includes wireless earphones/headphones. When sighted these devices will be treated in the same manner as other banned electronic devices. Wired earphones/headphones may be used during class times as per teacher instructions when accessing learning activities with video content.

Recess / Lunch / Breaks

Electronic devices are to remain locked in YONDR pouches on school grounds at all times.

Early Leavers

Students who leave school early will be able to unlock their devices at the Front Office when signing out.

Teacher Behaviour

Teachers are asked to not have their devices out during class, including marking rolls. Teachers are in the best placed position to model device free behaviour to students. Teachers may choose to participate in the program and have their devices in YONDR pouches when working with students. If a staff member must access an electronic device, eg. A PDHPE teacher marking their roll in the field, that staff member should explain why they are using the device.

Excursions

Phones are an important safety device. Phones should not be locked in pouches where students will be off site for a substantial time or unlikely to return to school at the end of the activity. This process will be at the discretion of the staff member supervising each excursion. Phones are not to be used while on excursions except for emergency unless directed by the supervising staff member. Where this instruction is not given, any use of phones will be considered a breach of the policy and actions outlined above may take place.

Unlocking Stations

Unlocking stations will NOT be provided to staff outside of the Admin Office. All other unlocking stations will be located at school entry points and only be available for certain periods of the day.

When a device is sighted by staff

The teacher must ask for the device be handed to the teacher immediately. If a student refuses, the teacher may:

- provide uptake time or use other strategies to allow the student to meet the school's expectations and then,
- collect the device and take it to the Deputy Principal at their earliest convenience, who will receipt it and take to front office to have it stored. Students can collect their phone at the end of the school day from the Front Office.

Please refer to the Script outlined at the end of these procedures.

Note: if a student refuses to hand over a device, the teacher is to send the student to the Deputy where they will be required to surrender their phone. The student will be issued a warning of suspension in-line with current procedures and contact will be made home. Suspension may result if disobedience continues.

What happens to confiscated devices?

Devices are considered the property of parents and guardians and are placed in the school's Front Office. Parents and guardians will be contacted by the Deputy Principal when students have breached the Policy and had their phone confiscated. Parents and Guardians will be informed of the consequence (Warning of Suspension letter or Suspension) and told that the phone will be released to the student at the end of the school day. Where contact cannot be made with the parent or guardian the device will be released to the student at the end of the day and Parent/Guardian contact made as soon as possible thereafter.

Damaged or lost pouches

Students who have lost or damaged their pouch are not to bring their device to school until they have organised a replacement pouch. If a student's device is seen, staff will follow the procedure outlined above.

Students are required to pay a nominal fee of \$15 for the replacement of the damaged or lost pouch. The school will keep a minimum float of 100 reserve pouches.

Students who need their device before or after school but have damaged or lost pouches can hand the device to the front office each morning where it will be kept according to the procedures listed above.

Evacuation/Emergency

Additional unlocking stations kept in the front office will be taken to the assembly point in the event of an evacuation. Students will only be allowed to unlock their devices during a genuine evacuation. Students must be sitting A-Z in roll lines with their attendance checked before devices are unlocked. Unlocking will be undertaken by staff and only while students remain seated.

Medical Use

In special circumstances, a student may be required by a physician to have an electronic device available so that they can self-monitor a condition, eg. diabetes. Where alternatives are not available, specific medical usage may be facilitated at school. Such need will be determined on a case by case basis and will form a part of that student's individualised Health Care Plan (HCP).

YONDR Inspections

At points during the year all students' YONDR pouches will be inspected to ensure they are still functional. Students may at times be given a week's notice prior to the inspection date to prepare although there will be random spot inspections called at times to check pouches also. As the students enter the school grounds in the morning, students may be asked to present their YONDR pouches. Primary focus will be on function and obscene graffiti. Student's pouches that cannot be quickly unlocked and locked will be either surrendered and billed OR replaced as determined by a nominated staff member.

SCRIPT

- If a device is sighted:

“Please hand the device to me, thanks”.

If a student refuses to hand over their device

- “You are required to hand your device to me as part of the YONDR procedures. Are you refusing to surrender your device?”

If a student still refuses to hand over their device

- Consult, at your earliest opportunity, the Deputy Principal for support in implementing procedures.