

Student Mobile Phone Policy



Rationale and Purpose

Mobile phones have become an important and invaluable part of our modern lifestyle. Maitland High School understands that there are times when possession of a mobile phone can provide a sense of safety and security while travelling to and from school and play a role in teaching and learning. We also recognise they may cause harm if used inappropriately and that we need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

This policy clearly outlines our expectations regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones by students at school or during

extra-curricular activities. The school aims to provide a happy, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students. The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that mobile phone, and associated technology, usage does not disrupt the learning environment. The procedures seek to clarify the responsibilities of staff and students regarding the use of technology.

Supporting Policies

This document is in line with the NSW Department of Education policy Student use of digital devices and online services; it explains to the Maitland High School community our procedures and the use of the phone pouch system from Term 3, 2023. The following Department of Education documents underpin the Maitland High School Mobile Phone Policy.

- Legal Issues Bulletin 35: Misuse of Technology in Schools
- Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy
- Impact of Mobile Digital Devices in Schools (CESE)
- [Online Communication Services: Acceptable Usage for School Students Policy](#)
- [Student Bring Your Own Device Policy](#)
- [Values in NSW Public Schools](#)

Scope

Mobile phones are not to be used during school hours from Day 1, Term 4, 2023. Every student will be assigned a personal phone pouch, similar to being assigned a textbook. While the phone pouch is considered school property, it is each student's responsibility to bring their pouch with them to school every day.

Responsibility for Mobile Phones

Students bring their phones to school at their own risk. The school is not responsible for phones that are lost, stolen or damaged at school or when students are travelling to and from school.

Student Expectations

Once allocated a pouch, students will be expected to have their phone secured in their pouch for the duration of the school day, except where exemptions apply as set out below. Students are not permitted to have headphones, air pods, earbuds, or other devices that connect to their phone via Bluetooth. If sighted these will be managed by staff the same way as a non-pouched device.

Once students enter school grounds they are expected to:

1. Unlock their pouch using an unlocking station (held by Executive Staff)
2. Turn their mobile phone OFF and place their phone in the pouch
3. Lock the pouch for the duration of the day
4. Unlock pouches at one of the unlocking stations as they leave school

Period 1 teachers will check that students have their phones locked in their pouch at the beginning of each day.

Distributing Pouches

- There will be a Whole School Assembly on Monday 9 October, 9am.
- Year Group meetings for timetable distribution will follow the assembly
- Pouches allocated in Period 1 classes by the Senior Executive.

Process

Building Entrance: As students enter the school, they will:

- 1) Turn their phone off.
- 2) Unlock their empty pouch using an unlocking base held by Executive staff members at the single gates on Hunter, High and Pierce St
- 3) Place their phone inside the pouch, securely close it and store in their bag.

Each student will maintain possession of their phone inside their pouch for the duration of the school day. Late students will complete this process at the Front Office as they sign in.

Building Exit: As students exit the building at the end of the school day, they will:

- 1) **Unlock their pouch using an Unlocking Base at the Canteen Cola.** *For the first 1-2 weeks only*, this will be a staggered release of Year groups:
 - **Year 7-** 2:50pm, accompanied by classroom teachers (CRTs). CRTs then to take students to Year 7 Quad and supervise. This process will be supervised by DP, Ms Schatz.
 - **Year 8-** 2:55pm, accompanied by classroom teachers (CRTs). CRTs then to take students to Year 7 Quad and supervise. This process will be supervised by DP Mr McKay.
 - **Year 9-** 3:00 pm, accompanied by classroom teachers (CRTs). CRTs then to take students to Year 7 Main Quad and supervise. This process will be supervised by DP Ms Henry.
 - **Year- 10 & 11** 3:05pm, accompanied by classroom teachers (CRTs). CRTs then to take students to Year Main Quad and supervise. This process will be supervised by Ms Graham and new DP, Ms Thompson.
- 2) **Remove their phone from their pouch.**
- 3) **Securely close their empty pouch and place it in their backpack for the next day.**
- 4) **Early departures** e.g excused absence for a doctor's appointment in which case the student will unlock their pouch at the Front Office.

Mobile Phone Usage

Students are permitted to use their mobile phones in a responsible way before school and after school. Mobile phones, headphones, and earphones are not permitted for use within the classroom unless explicitly stated by the classroom teacher. If a teacher observes a student with their mobile phone the processes listed in the flowchart at the end of this policy will be followed.

Where there is a need to use a phone for a learning task, for example filming a movement in PDHPE, the teacher will have access to an unlocking station through the head teacher. At the conclusion of the learning activity students are expected to return their phone to the pouch as set out above.

Students will not have access to their phones during break times to encourage increased levels of physical activity and more positive interactions between students.

Canteen / Sport Card Payments

Students will not be able to access their mobile phone to make card payments during the school day. Students will need to bring their plastic debit card in a wallet.

Exemptions

Non-pouched devices are not permitted on school grounds during school hours unless part of a specific learning experience or their use is described in an individual learning plan. Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances. Exceptions to the policy may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically, health and wellbeing-related exceptions or where mobile phones are required as per a teaching program. **Parents/carers can request an exemption, and these will be considered on a case-by-case basis and granted when required by law or at the principal's discretion.** Parent/carer/student appointments need to be made with the DP of the Year group to be provisioned with a Special Purpose Card to enable phone access under specified conditions. Students with exemptions will have the following;

- Phone Pouch Exemption Pass
- Flagged on Sentral student profile

Students and parents understand that those students with a Special Purpose Card exemption are still required to have phones 'Off and Away' unless required for reasons outlined as part of the exemption. Students with exemptions to cover such things as diabetes monitoring or severe and diagnosed Anxiety, will be given a phone pouch which has Velcro access to store their phones while at school.

Contact between students and parents and carers during the school day

Should a student need to make a call during the school day, they must:

- approach the Front Office and ask for permission to use the school's phone.
- During school hours, parents and carers are expected to only contact their children via the school office. A message will then be sent to student.

Guidelines

1. All students will be provided with a free pouch that is their responsibility to manage. **Should a student misplace, damage or lose their pouch they will be responsible for the replacement cost of \$20.**
2. **Mobile phones are to be locked in the pouch prior to the bell at the commencement of Period 1** (or before they enter the classroom if arriving after the bell) and remain locked in the pouch until the end of the school day.
3. At the commencement of Period 1, all students will place their locked pouch containing their mobile phone on their desk where the teachers will inspect that they are locked.
4. Students requiring use of their mobile phone for medical purposes or as part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Health Care Plan (HCP) will be allowed access when necessary. This will be managed by the head teacher Wellbeing and deputy principal. Students will be provided a Special Purpose card to show their permission.
5. At times, teachers may instruct students to use mobile phones for specific educational purposes. At these times students may use their phone. The teacher will allow students to unlock their pouch. Upon completion of the task the teacher will instruct students to place their mobile phones back into their pouch and lock them, followed by teacher inspection of the locked pouches.
6. Use of mobile phones during excursions and on camp is to be determined by the classroom teacher or teacher in charge of the excursion or camp. This will be advised on the permission note prior to the event.
7. Students will not send text messages, play games, use unauthorised apps, listen to music or any audio material or view videos during the school day.
8. Students will not take or transmit photos video or audio recordings of any school activity, including student interactions in the playground.
9. Students will not make, transmit or publish unauthorised images or audio that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
10. Students will not participate in cyberbullying, including abuse transmitted electronically such as by email, Facebook, Twitter, SMS text messages or apps such as Snapchat, Instagram or by any other electronic means. Any such action will be dealt with according to the school discipline procedures and DoE policy. Issues of a serious nature may be referred directly to the police.
11. Smart watches are allowed to be used in a similar manner to analogue watches. Inappropriate use of smart watches (such as accessing functions available on mobile phones) may result in similar action being taken for the unacceptable use of mobile phones.
12. Mobile phones and smartwatches are to be switched off and placed in the student's pouch during assessment tasks, as per the School's Assessment Policy.
13. If students use mobile phones inappropriately, or refuse to comply with this policy, the Principal (or their delegate) reserves the right to take appropriate action. Depending on the circumstances, action may include but are not limited to:
 - Application of student disciplinary provisions in accordance with the MHS behaviour management policy.
 - At any time throughout the day, if a student phone is seen by a staff member, they have not followed initial steps as per student expectations. The student will be directed to the office to see the appropriate deputy principal.
14. It is important mobile phones are not used to bypass school procedures in relation to school-parent contact. Any messages for students are managed through the front office (02) 49337933. If a student needs to contact a parent during lesson time or vice versa, this should be managed through the front office.
15. Students are required to abide by all related DoE and MHS policies. In situations not specifically addressed in these policies, the principal or their delegate will make the final determination regarding any action to be taken.

Violations

Below are a list of potential student violations. Each of these violations will result in the student's device/phone and/or pouch being confiscated by school staff.

- 1) Physical damage to the pouch in an attempt to circumvent its intended purpose.
- 2) Forgetting or losing the pouch – phone will be left at front office.
- 3) Using their phone during school hours.
- 4) Using a 'burner' phone, fake phone, calculator, old phone and putting it in the pouch instead of their real phone.
- 5) Other devices, such as laptops, tablets, head phones and smartwatches, pose similar challenges and opportunities. These devices can be linked to mobile phones and therefore the same policy applies to these actions.
- 6) All digital devices, not just mobile phones, should be used in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

Repeated unsanctioned mobile phone use at school will result in Formal Caution Warning of Suspension and may lead to suspension.

Disciplinary Action if a pouch is deliberately damaged

- 1) Phone and pouch will be confiscated and parent/guardian will be notified immediately.
- 2) Student's parent/guardian must come to the school to pick up their child's phone and a replacement pouch may be purchased.
- 3) **Suspension Warning** for damage to school property
- 4) The deputy principal will notify the Business Manager. The Business Manager will invoice student and parents via email and phone call for replacement pouch.
- 5) The student will only be allowed to bring a phone back to school if they or their parent/guardian pay a \$20 fee to replace the damaged school property.

Responsibilities and Obligations

For students:

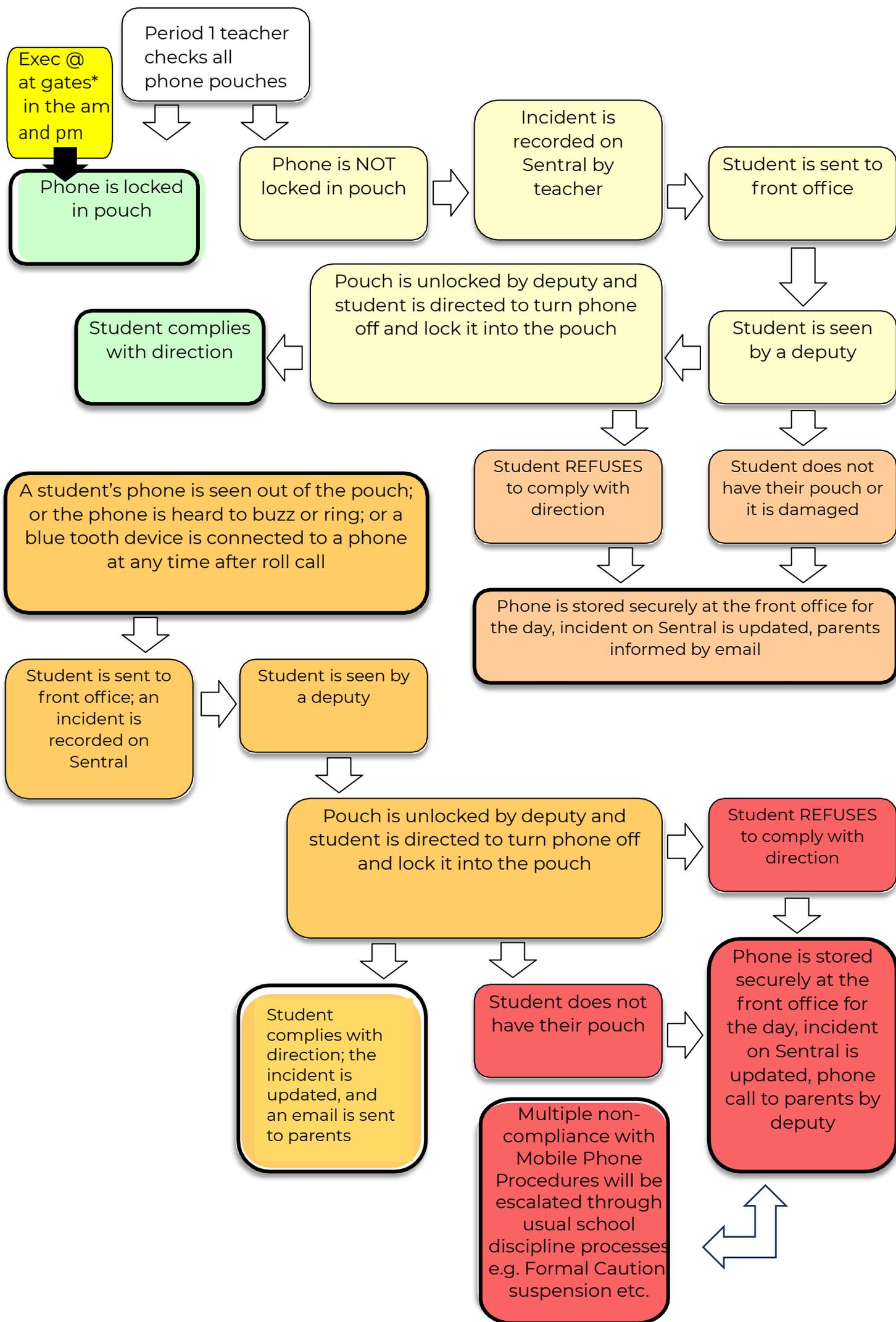
- Be respectful, responsible, and fair users of digital devices and online services and support their peers to be the same.
- Respect and follow school rules and procedures and the decisions made by staff.
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community and behave in the ways described in the Behaviour Code for Students.

For parents and carers:

- Recognise the role they play in educating their children and modelling the behaviours that underpin the respectful, responsible, and fair use of digital devices and online services.
- Support implementation of the school procedure.
- Communicate with school staff and the school community respectfully and collaboratively as outlined in the [School Community Charter](#).

Complaints

If a student, parent, or carer has a complaint under this procedure, they should first email the school, attention Principal, with the subject line, 'Phone policy complaint', to maitland-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the department's [Making a complaint about NSW public schools - guide for parent & carers](#).



Student Charter and Agreement

RESPECT

- I show respect when I use online services
 - I protect the privacy, safety, and wellbeing of others
 - I do not share anyone else's personal information
 - I get permission before taking a photo or video of someone
 - I do not harass or bully other students, school staff or anyone, this includes cyberbullying when I use a digital device or online service
- I show respect when I send information, images, or messages to other people
 - My messages or content will not upset or embarrass another person or group
 - My messages or content is not inappropriate, offensive, or abusive
 - My messages or content are never considered bullying
 - My messages or content do not contain a virus or other harmful software

RESPONSIBILITY

- I am responsible when I follow instructions from school staff
 - My phone is off and kept in my pouch while I am at school
 - I make sure my pouch is locked properly
- I am responsible when I use any digital device or online service
 - I only use online services in the ways my teachers ask
 - I only access appropriate content and websites
 - I protect my personal information (name, address, school, email address, telephone number, pictures, and other personal details)
 - I only use my username and password, and never share them with others
 - I ask a teacher or other responsible adult for help if anyone online asks for personal information, wants to meet, or offers me money or gifts
 - I let a teacher or other responsible adult know immediately if I find anything online that is suspicious, harmful, in appropriate
- The school is responsible for my safety, they can monitor everything done on the school's network and will provide information to police or other agencies for investigations, court proceedings or for other legal reasons.
- I show I am responsible by not using another student's account to use online services
- I show I am responsible when I take care of school-owned devices that are shared with others.
- I show I am responsible by never hacking, disabling, or bypassing any hardware or software security, including any virus protection, spam and filter settings.
- The school shows it is responsible by ensuring my learning is not interrupted by phone distractions
- I show I am responsible by ensuring the pouch issued to me is kept in good, working order and is not damaged or tampered with. I understand that I will need to pay \$20 for a new phone pouch should it be lost or deliberately damaged. I understand that I will be unable to bring my phone to school unless it is in the pouch issued to me.

PERSONAL BEST

- I demonstrate my personal best by ensuring that my phone is off and locked in my pouch every day
- I demonstrate my personal best by focusing on my learning without distraction or the interruption of others
- I demonstrate that I want the best for others and treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Signed Student:

Signed Parent: / Carer:

Date:

Date: