

Use of Personal Technology Devices at School Policy

Benowa State High School has a zero-tolerance policy for misuse of mobile phones or electronic devices, including ear pods/headphones for a device, being seen, used or heard during class time. The simple rule is “turned off and put away”. Personal technology devices may be used at morning tea and lunch breaks and before and after school only.

Misuse of mobile phones and electronic devices, including ear pods/headphones for a device in the learning environment will see these items temporarily removed from a student. All staff can temporarily remove property from a student as per the department’s Temporary Removal of Student Property by School Staff (refer Appendix 4). Student property that has been temporarily removed by school staff can be collected from Administration after school.

On some occasions teachers will permit the use of devices in class for clear educational reasons (this does not include listening to music while doing other work). The teacher will explicitly explain the parameters for use of the device.

Mobile phones are not permitted to be charged at school.

Bringing mobile phones and personal technology devices, with the exception of a BYOx device, to school is not encouraged by the school because of the potential for theft and general distraction and/or disruption associated with them. Under no circumstances will the school accept responsibility for the loss of any personal items.

The sharing of inappropriate images by mobile phone will be regarded as gross misconduct and subject to consequences in the Student Code of Conduct.

Personal technology device etiquette

Every member of the school community should feel confident about participating fully and frankly in all aspects of school life without concern that their personal privacy is being invaded by them being recorded without their knowledge or consent.

We uphold the value of trust and the right to privacy at Benowa State High School. Students using mobile phones and other electronic devices (including BYOx devices) to record inappropriate behaviours or incidents (such as vandalism, fighting, bullying, staged fighting or pranks etc) for the purpose of dissemination among the student body or outside the school, by any means (including distribution by phone or internet posting) builds a culture of distrust and disharmony and will not be tolerated.

Students must not record images anywhere that recording would not reasonably be considered appropriate (e.g. in change rooms, toilets or any other place where a reasonable person would expect to be afforded privacy).

Recording of events in class is not permitted unless express consent is provided by the class teacher.

A student at school who uses a mobile phone and/or electronic device (including BYOx devices) to record private conversations, ordinary school activities (apart from social functions like graduation ceremonies) or violent, illegal or embarrassing matter capable of bringing the school into public disrepute is considered to be in breach of this policy.

Even where consent is obtained for such recording, the school will not tolerate images or sound captured by mobile phone and/or electronic devices (including BYOx devices) on the school premises or elsewhere being disseminated to others, if it is done for the purpose of causing embarrassment to individuals or the school, for the purpose of bullying¹ or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, or where without such intent a reasonable person would conclude that such outcomes may have or will occur.

Students involved in:

- recording; and/or
- disseminating material (through text messaging, social media, display, internet uploading etc); and/or,
- knowingly being a subject of a recording

Breach of this policy is a major breach of the Student Code and Conduct and subject to consequences (including suspension and recommendation for exclusion).

Students should note that the recording or dissemination of images that are considered indecent (such as nudity or sexual acts involving children), is against the law and if detected by the school will result in a referral to the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

Text communication

The sending of text messages that contain obscene language and/or threats of violence may amount to bullying and or harassment or even stalking, and will subject the sender to discipline and possible referral to the QPS. Students receiving such text messages at school, should ensure they keep the message as evidence and bring the matter to the attention of the school.

Recording private conversations and the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971

It is important that all members of the school community understand that under the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971, 'a person is guilty of an offence against this Act if the person uses a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation'. It is also an offence under the Act for a person who has overheard, recorded, monitored or listened to a conversation to which s/he is not a party to publish or communicate the substance or meaning of the conversation to others.

Students need to understand that some conversations are private and therefore to overhear, record, monitor or listen to such private conversations may be in breach of this Act, unless consent to the recording is appropriately obtained.

¹ The Department of Education does not tolerate bullying behaviour at schools. This includes bullying conducted by electronic means.