# Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure
*Updated - 14/03/2024*

## Purpose
This procedure guides student use of digital devices and online services at our school. Our school acknowledges the educational value of digital devices and online services in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes and student wellbeing. We also recognise that they may cause harm if used inappropriately and we are dedicated to supporting our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

## This document:

- provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school;
- sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents/carers;
- provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing;
- covers student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings including on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a *clear and close connection* between the school and the conduct of students; and
- covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services.

## Our school's approach:

- **Phones and devices (including smart watches) are to be turned off and put away during school hours. Smartwatches can be worn if they are put in flight/school mode during school hours.** Upon entering the school grounds, mobile phones are switched off and put in student bags. Devices can be switched back on once students have left the school grounds. Students may use their device at an entry gate for safety purposes (e.g. to let their parent/caregiver know that they have arrived safely) If students need to contact a parent or caregiver for any other legitimate reason while they are on the school grounds before or after school, they must approach a member of staff and ask to do so.
- **During off-site activities (e.g. PSSA, excursions)** - all devices (both smartphones and smartwatches) are to be **'off and away'** for the duration of the activity.
- Students are not permitted to bring devices when attending camps or overnight excursions.
- If a student brings a phone or any such device to school, they do so at their own risk

## Exemptions
Exemptions to any part of this procedure may apply for some students in some circumstances (e.g. medical requirements). Parents and 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.

## Consequences for inappropriate use
*Depending on the circumstances, action can include:*
- confiscating mobile phones from individual students. If this occurs it may be returned to the student at the end of the day, or a parent may be required to retrieve the device;
- restricting digital access at school (related to school devices); and
- disciplinary action as per the RPS Behaviour Management procedures.

## Contact between students and parents/carers during the school day

Should a student need to contact a parent or carer during the school day, they must do so through their teacher or the front office. Devices **must not** be used to communicate with parents, carers or other parties during school hours. If a parent/carer needs to contact their child for any reason during the school day, they can call the front office and the message will be communicated to the child.

## Responsibilities and obligations

### For students:
- Be safe, responsible and respectful users of digital devices and online services and support their peers to be the same
- Understand, respect and follow the school rules and procedures and decisions made by staff in relation to devices and online behaviour
- Read, understand and reflect the behaviour contained in the 'RPS Digital Citizenship Use Agreement'
- Communicate respectfully and collaboratively with peers, school staff and the school community

### For parents and carers:
- Understand the role they play in supporting the education of their children and modelling behaviours that exemplify safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services
- Support children to understand the importance of, and application of the 'RPS Digital Citizenship Use Agreement'
- Support the implementation of the schools procedure, including the resolution of issues
- Take responsibility for their child's use of digital devices and online services at home such as use of online services with age and content restrictions
- In the case of smartwatches and wrist-worn devices, understanding that these can create unnecessary distractions that can impact a child's ability to engage in learning and determine their necessity in the school environment

### For the principals and teachers:
- Deliver learning experiences that encourage safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services. This includes: modelling safe and respectful use in the classroom and creating class expectations that are underpinned by these procedures and the 'RPS Digital Citizenship Use Agreement'
- Respond to and report any breaches and incidents of inappropriate use of digital devices and online services as required by school procedures, departmental policy and any statutory or regulatory requirements. This includes: reporting the creation, possession or distribution of indecent or offensive material to the Incident Support and Reporting hotline as required by the Incident Notification and Response Policy and Procedures and consider any mandatory reporting requirements; working with the Department and the Office of the eSafety Commissioner (if necessary) to resolve cases of serious online bullying and image-based abuse; and follow the schools behaviour management plan when responding to any incident of inappropriate student behaviour relating to the use of digital devices or online services
- Where feasible, support parents and carers to understand and implement strategies that promote their children's safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices or online services
- Participate in professional development related to appropriate use of digital devices and online services
- Be aware of of the Department's policy, this procedure and act in line with the conduct described
- Report any inappropriate use of digital devices and online services to the principal, school executive or school staff they are working with

## Communication

*This procedure will be:*
- Communicated to parents and carers via SchoolBytes;
- Placed on the RPS website for viewing;
- Put into the school newsletter; and
- Communicated to staff at a communication meeting.

## Complaints

If a student, parent or carer has a complaint about this procedure, they should first follow the school's complaints process. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the Department's guide for making a complaint about our schools (https://prod65.education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2002-0051)

## Resources/references

- The procedure above is underpinned by the NSW Department of Education 'Digital Devices and Online Services for Students' policy - https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/pd-2020-0471
- The Department's Digital Citizenship platform provides advice, conversation starters and learning resources for students, teachers, parents and carers. It is continually updated as technology and online services develop https://www.digitalcitizenship.nsw.edu.au/
- The Office of the e-Safety Commissioner (https://www.esafety.gov.au/) also offer a range of resources for all stakeholders.

## Review

School executives will review this procedure in consultation with the P&C as needed.

*Review Date - 26/03/2026*