

# Murrumburrah High School

Preparing our students for tomorrow's challenges through learning

Principal: Mr Dale Rands



Dear Parent / Carer,

As of Term 4 2023, all student mobile phones are banned from use at school. This is in response to the State Governments directive for the phone ban to be applied to all schools in New South Wales.

In accordance with the new policy released by the Department of Education, Murrumburrah High School will implement the following procedures:

## **Upon arriving at school:**

1: All student mobile phones will be turned off and placed and locked into assigned school lockers by students as soon as they arrive at school, not when the school bell rings. Phones are to be turned off as soon as a student comes onto school grounds, no last-minute calls etc as they walk across the oval from the bus bay or similar.

2: All lockers will be numbered and will be allocated to a single student, who is the only person to know the 4-digit combination for that locker. Students should not share their combination as they alone are responsible for the safety of their phone. No students should share their combination to allow other students access to their locker. The school is not responsible should a phone go missing. It is advisable to consider simply leaving the phone and its accessories at home.

3: Once phones are locked up, they are not to be accessed under any circumstances until the end of the school day and must not be used until the student completely leaves the school grounds. Students are not to loiter in the locker area once they have locked up or retrieved their phone.

4: If a student is required to leave school early, they are to sign out at the front office before removing their phone from the locker. This should only occur once a carer has arrived to collect the student or where permission to walk home has been given.

5: Should a student have an urgent and school related issue that requires a phone call home, they are to speak to the Front Office staff during break times only, not during class time.

6: All peripheral devices i.e., earphones, earbuds, portable speakers etc are part of the ban and are not to be used at school. They can be locked up or left at home as they are not needed at school. The school has headphones for classroom educational use. Smart watches, tablets etc are not banned but will be monitored by staff to ensure they are not being used for non-educational reasons. This could change in the future. They are banned for use during assessment events at school.

7: School excursions - where an excursion operates within the normal school times, phones are to be locked up as normal. If an excursion is to either start or finish outside of regular school hours the phone should either be left at home or in your bag for the duration of the excursion. They can only be used once a teacher has given that instruction to contact parents about return time. Misuse of mobile phones whilst on overnight excursions will lead to action by the school, in accordance with school policy.

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8: School Sport – Where a student has sport at school the phones are to remain in the lockers until the end of the school day. If a student has a sport off school grounds and is not returning to school after sport, they may retrieve their phones under the supervision of their sport teacher at the beginning of sport and place the phone in their bag until the school day ends. Phone expectations regarding swimming/athletic carnivals etc will be explained later but will also require no access to phones during the school day.

9: Where a staff member requires the use of a mobile phone for an approved educational reason related to curriculum (consultation with their supervisor), then the teacher will supervise those students getting their phone out during that lesson and returning them before lessons end.

10: Students are responsible for remembering the 4-digit code to access their locker, this will not be stored by the school for privacy reasons. The School Principal will be the only person with an override key.

11: Should parents wish to get an urgent message to their child please call the Front Office for assistance. At many times of the week there is only 1 staff member in the office, completing the days tasks and running messages to students may not occur at the time of the call, please be considerate when calling.

12: Senior students will be allocated a larger locker for storing books etc as well as their mobile phone. Seniors will be trusted to not use their phone during the school day. Should a senior student abuse this privilege, they will lose their senior locker access and be assigned a junior locker for a period of time to store their phone.

## **If a student has been seen using a phone during the school day (or at an external sport/excursion):**

1: On the first occasion, the student will be asked to take the phone to the office. A parent will be called to collect the phone as it will not be handed back to the student. Should a student refuse to hand in a sighted/used phone, the matter will be referred to points 2 and 3 in this list.

2: On a second occasion the parent will be requested to meet with the School Principal to discuss the matter.

3: Subsequent breaches of the new procedures and policy will be referred to the suspension and expulsion guidelines that all public schools operate under as well as the school's internal behaviour management procedures. This may include removal of privileges, formal cautions, suspensions or similar for continued disobedience at school.

4: Use of a phone during an off-site school sport may also result in that student losing the privilege of choosing an off-site sport for a period of time and will be restricted to on school sports choices only.

5: Unauthorised use of a mobile phone during an excursion may also result in that student losing the privilege of non-compulsory excursion attendance for a length of time.

## **Exemption from this policy:**

1: The School Principal is the only person who may grant an exemption from the phone ban, and this may only occur under very essential reasons after booking a face-to-face meeting with the Principal and necessary paperwork provided and completed. A meeting does not guarantee an exemption. No parent can override this rule and cannot give permission for their child to use a phone at school. This would be a breach of the new policy.



NO EXEMPTION APPLIES UNLESS APPROVED BY THE PRINCIPAL.

2: Students granted an exemption will have the reasons and support strategies outlined in their learning plans, which are available to all staff to read. Exemptions will only be for a specific period of time to allow other solutions to be arranged.

### **School Canteen and other payments:**

1: Any payments for food or excursions etc can be made by cash or card. Phone tap payments may only be made by parents paying at the Front Office.

2: Canteen food can be purchased and paid for by card or cash. Food can also be preordered and prepaid online via the schools ordering app - My School Connect. For information on the download or use of this app, please contact the Front Office or the school P&C for advice.

3: Individual students with special dietary requirements (as per their school health care plan) can discuss this with the school canteen manager for assistance with their needs or can simply bring their food with them each day. This is not the case for all students. The school canteen operates under the healthy school's canteen policy and sells only food that complies with this policy but will be considerate of an individual's health care needs.

4: Where a student wishes to not bring their normal account card into school, please contact your child's bank to obtain a debit card which can have small amounts placed on the card each day. If a student, then loses this card their accounts are not at risk. Consult your bank for the best up to date advice. Of course, cash is always accepted.

The aim of the new policy is not to restrict student choice, but to allow students to improve their educational outcomes and growth in achievement without being distracted at school by non-educational devices. The phone ban will also restrict the online negative social behaviours associated with mobile phones and the prank calling, recording of conversations, TikTok's during school time and break times etc that has previously taken place.

The school reserves the right to review these procedures as the need arises and any updates will be communicated to the school community.

Kind regards

**Mr Dale Rands**

Principal

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Sample Locker Only – MHS lockers will have 4-digit combination locks, not keys.