

## Personal Devices Policy

### General

Newpark Comprehensive School aims to maintain a positive learning environment where the dignity and rights of all members of the school community are respected. The use of technology is increasingly part of modern life. The school is conscious of the potential negative impact that personal devices may have on learning and wellbeing.

This policy replaces the school's *Mobile Phone Policy*. It has been adopted following consultation with school stakeholders and with regard to changing information both nationally and internationally.

For the purposes of this policy, 'personal device' refers to any phone or personal digital device. This includes: phones, tablets, gaming devices, all internet enabled devices, headphones, earbuds or any similar devices. The school reserves the right to add to this list as new technologies emerge.

The term 'personal device' does not extend to school-approved digital devices, such as licensed student laptops or school-owned devices.

This policy extends to all parts of the school campus, including the Sports Centre, and to times when students are off campus on a school activity.

Personal devices are the responsibility of the individual. The school accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged items.

### Regulations

The following regulations apply in relation to personal device usage in school.

#### General

1. Students are obliged to have a school-approved storage pouch for their phone. It is the student's responsibility to maintain the condition of the pouch and to use it for its intended purpose. All other devices should be stored away.

#### On Campus

2. Students are not permitted to use personal devices before the end of the school day. Students may access their personal devices from 15.50 (Wednesday 13.10) onwards.
3. Upon entering the school grounds, students should turn off their devices and place their phone in a school-approved storage pouch.

#### Off Campus

4. When off campus on school activities, students may not use personal devices without the school's permission.

#### Recording

5. No photographs, video or audio recordings may be made on campus, or while on off-campus school activities, without the school's permission.

### Sanctions

In the event that a student does not follow the regulations above, the device will be confiscated and retained for the remainder of the day. The teacher will record this using the MD system.

Upon confiscation, the device should first be powered off by the student and placed in its storage pouch. The confiscated device will be stored in the School Office.

To retrieve the device, the student should seek out a Deputy Principal or the Principal once the school day is over. If neither a Deputy Principal nor the Principal is available, a Year Leader may fulfil this role.

The consequence for not forfeiting a personal device, when requested to do so by a teacher, is a one-day suspension from school.

The school accepts no responsibility in the event that a claim is made with respect to a lost or damaged confiscated device.

If a student is deemed to be persistently in breach of the regulations, parents/guardians may be contacted, and an appropriate sanction will be implemented.

## Supports

The school recognises that personal devices are a prominent feature of many young people's lives. To support students in regulating their own personal device use, the following supports have been put in place:

- **Digital learning:** Digital learning devices are being used in the classroom. This includes the phased integration of student laptops, the use of COWs (Computers on Wheels), digital cameras, computer room access, and the use of teacher devices as learning tools.
- **Education:** The school teaches students about the impact of personal device use through various programmes on its curriculum.
- **Face-to-face opportunities:** The school promotes face-to-face student interaction through a broad suite of lunchtime clubs, facilities for 'real-world' games such as table tennis, and rich opportunities for afterschool extracurricular activities.
- **Communication systems:** These include noticeboards, digital noticeboards, Announcements of the Day and the intercom system. Microsoft Teams will be limited to sending communications for learning opportunities and for advance-notice announcements only.
- **Necessary contact with home:** In instances where it is necessary for students to contact home, students may present at the School Office and will be assisted accordingly.
- **Quiet Room:** To assist students who may find the transition to a phone-free campus challenging, a Quiet Room is in place at lunchtime.

To support their children, parents/guardians should not contact students during the school day. In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians should contact the School Office at 01-2883724. Students who feel unwell should alert the Nurse, who will contact home, when necessary.

## Additional Needs

Parents/guardians of students who have additional needs identified by a report from an appropriate professional, may apply for their child to have limited access to a personal device if required. This application should be made in writing to the student's Year Leader.

An application will be considered by the Year Leader in consultation with a Deputy Principal and/or the Principal, with a view to reasonably accommodating additional needs within a mainstream school setting. An application does not guarantee a student will be granted access to a requested device.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Relationships and Behaviour Policy*, the *Anti-Bullying Policy* and the *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy*.

It will be reviewed again as required, in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation and/or feedback from school stakeholders.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meetings on 12 March 2025 and 30 April 2025 and comes into effect from the start of the academic year 2025/2026.