POLICY TITLE: **Personal Use of Communication Devices Plan (Red Hill School)**

PUBLISHED: **April 2024**

RE: Implementation of *Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy*

As part of our commitment to ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment, we would like to bring to your attention the following policies and procedures regarding the use of electronic devices on school grounds. The policy will take effect from the first day of term 1, 2024.

The policy means that students may not use or access their personal electronic device at all during the school day unless they have an explicit exemption.

A copy of the Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy can be accessed on the Education Directorate's website Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy - Education.

Device Responsibility

We prefer that students do not bring their personal communication devices to school. If students do bring their devices[1] to school, the responsibility for these devices rests solely with the students. The school cannot be held accountable for any loss or damage that may occur while the devices are on school premises.

Device Storage

Students in years P-10 are required to adhere to designated storage protocols for their devices during the school day.

- Upper primary students (year 5 and 6) are required to use the lockable BYOD cupboards in their classrooms.
- Students in other year levels are expected to hand their device to their classroom teacher or front office staff to be locked away safely for the duration of the school day (9.10am-3.15pm).

Alternative Contact Means

In case of urgent matters that arise during the school day, students have the option to contact their primary caregivers through alternative means. The school office serves as the primary point of contact:

- Phone: 614 20960
- Email: info@redhillps.act.edu.au

Behavioural expectations

The school's student management policy emphasises Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) principles, focusing on teaching and reinforcing Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) expectations.

At school students are expected to:

- Follow adult instructions about personal communication devices.
- Keep mobile phones and smart watches at home.

[1] Devices include BYOD devices for learning and personal communication devices such as Smart watches and mobile phones.

- Lock mobile phones and smartwatches away in the classroom or at the front office between 9.10am and 3.15pm.
- Keep mobile phones and smart watches in their bags between arriving at school and 9.10am.
- Use Chromebooks, iPads and/or laptops for learning purposes only.

Students are expected to comply with these behavioural expectations, and non-compliance will be addressed in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures outlined in the student management policy: Relational_Policy_and_Procedures_2019.pdf (redhillps.act.edu.au).

School leaders and teachers will, in the first instance, view breaches of the *Personal Use of Communication Devices Policy* as an opportunity for further learning and will act in accordance with the *Minor and Major Definitions* (ACT Education, 2026) for use of personal communication devices (Refer to Appendix 1) and online safety (Refer to Appendix 2).

Exemptions

Parents/carers can apply for an exemption by submitting an ACT Education Directorate Exemption Request form to the school or via email on: info@redhillps.act.edu.au.

- Students who require watches or smart phones to communicate with family members outside school hours do not require an exemption. However, as per the *Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy*, these devices should be locked away in classrooms or at the front office during school hours.

  Note: Parental controls, or other type of controls, can be applied to phones and smart watches. While these controls can be useful in specific use cases, students can often find ways to override them. The use of smart devices with a parental control does not make them exempt from the current policy.

- Students in the upper primary years (5 and 6) do not require an exemption to bring a device to school for learning purposes, provided they have returned signed copies of the BYOD Essential Agreement and ICT Code of Practice. This exemption only applies to Chromebooks, laptops and iPads.

Review and Improvement

To ensure the effectiveness of these policies and identify areas for enhancement, our school will review device storage, and communication protocols and implementation procedures. This ongoing evaluation aims to refine our practices and ensure their alignment with the evolving needs of our school community.

We encourage you to familiarise yourself with these policies and actively participate in promoting a secure environment conducive to learning.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in maintaining a positive educational experience for all our students.

Sincerely,

Louise Owens

Principal

APPENDIX 1

MINOR AND MAJOR BEHAVIOURS: USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

	Use of Personal Communication Device (Minor Behaviour)	**Use of Personal Communication Device** (Major Behaviour)
Definition	Student has used or accessed a personal communications device at school, including class time (K-12), recess and lunch (K-10), or during a school authorised event (K-10) without exemption.	Repeated, escalating, or defiant use of a personal communication device during school hours or school-authorised events without exemption.
Type	• Mobile phone • Chromebook • Earphones/Headphones • Smart watch • Other	
Context	• The student is responsive to redirection and hands over device if redirected.	• The behaviour may be ongoing after supports are put in place and may involve refusal to follow staff directions.
Clarifying Questions	• What was the device being used for? • Did the student stop using the device when redirected, or did they refuse? • Did the behaviour occur on a single occasion, or across multiple days or events?	
Examples	• Using a mobile phone in class without exemption/permission. • Using a smartwatch to send or receive messages during a lesson. • Accessing a personal communication device during recess or lunch (K-10) when not permitted. • Using a device during a school authorised event or excursion without exemption.	• Refusal to hand over the personal communication device if used within school hours. • Repeated misuse of personal communication device (refer to schoolwide data decision rule – X minors within X timeframe).
Reporting Rules	• For any incident involving personal communication devices, staff must select the specific device type in the record details section of the form: mobile phone, Chromebook, earphones, smart watch, other. • If the behaviour involves accessing or sharing online content that is threatening, intimidating, or humiliating, record under online safety incident. • Explicit, illegal, or highly sensitive content must be escalated to school leadership so the incident can be reported to School Operations. • If a device was used to capture images/videos of fights, hazards, or unsafe situations, staff must escalate to school leadership so the incident can be reported to School Operations.	

Source: ACT Education, July 2026. *Minor and Major Behaviour Definitions,* p.12

APPENDIX 2

MINOR AND MAJOR BEHAVIOURS: ONLINE SAFETY

	Online Safety Incident (Minor Behaviour)	**Online Safety Incident** (Major Behaviour)
	This classification refers to behaviour that occurs online, including bullying, harassment and discrimination. If comparable behaviour occurs in person, staff are required to record the incident under the appropriate behaviour category rather than as an Online Safety Incident.	
Definition	Misuse of a digital platform that causes an instance of upset, discomfort, or social exclusion.	Targeted or repeated misuse of one or more digital platforms involving harassment, threats, discrimination, or the sharing of illegal, violent, or intimate content.
Type	• **Online harassment and discrimination:** Behaviour that is unwelcome, offensive or humiliating and directed at a person or group through online platforms, messages, posts, images or other electronic communication. It may relate to personal characteristics such as race, religion, culture, disability, gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. • **Impersonation:** Misuse of another person's identity or account. • **Digitally generated images:** Edited or created images that cause embarrassment or discomfort but do not depict sexual, violent, or discriminatory material. • **Other online safety concerns:** Digital behaviour that causes isolated upset or exclusion but does not fit another type.	• **Online bullying, harassment and discrimination:** Digital behaviour that is repeated, sustained, or coordinated, and that misuses power to intimidate, threaten, exclude, humiliate or cause significant psychological, social or reputational harm. This behaviour is delivered through online platforms, messages, posts, digital images, recordings or other electronic communication. • **Impersonation:** Use of someone's identity or account to deceive, intimidate, or damage reputation, including creating false profiles or distributing harmful material. • **Image-based abuse:** Creation, sharing, requesting, or threatening to share sexual, intimate, altered, or illegal images of a person, including actions intended to shame or coerce. • **Digitally generated images:** Altered or AI created images portraying sexual, violent, discriminatory, or harmful material intended to intimidate, threaten, or damage reputation. • **Violent or extremist content:** Accessing, sharing, or distributing material that depicts violence, encourages harm, or promotes extremist views or ideologies. • **Other online safety concerns:** Serious digital behaviour causing significant harm, fear, or safety risk that does not fit another type.
Context	• The behaviour is typically a first-time incident and contained between two individuals. • The behaviour is inappropriate but does not involve threats, repeated targeting, significant harm, or wide distribution. • The behaviour does not include targeted harassment, threats, discrimination, or the sharing of illegal, violent, or intimate content.	• The behaviour may be repeated or may continue after the instigator has been asked to stop. • The behaviour may occur across multiple platforms, be widely shared, and may involve a group dynamic. • The behaviour may pose a significant threat to a student's safety, security, or wellbeing.
Clarifying Questions	• Did the behaviour result in visible distress, fear, or social exclusion for the person affected? • Was the behaviour a one-off incident, or has it occurred multiple times? • Was the instigator asked to stop, and did they continue? • Was the behaviour contained between two individuals, or did it involve a group or wider community? • Was the behaviour part of a friendship group dynamic, or did it involve targeting by multiple individuals?	
Examples	• Accessing an online account using someone else's password. • Using inappropriate or offensive language in online forums and classrooms. • Engaging in general name-calling or swearing at someone online. • Creating or sharing memes designed to make fun of or embarrass someone. • Excluding someone from an online group, chat, or game. • Accessing inappropriate content on a school device (e.g. pornography, violent and extremism content).	• Creating fake images, or accounts, to impersonate, misrepresent, or post hurtful content about someone. • Sharing violent content, such as videos of physical fights or bullying. • Spreading harmful rumours or false information about others. • Tricking someone into sharing personal information and then distributing it publicly. • Pressuring someone into risky online activities like scams, gambling, or dangerous challenges. • Using hate speech, discriminatory language, or sexually harassing someone. • Threatening someone with physical harm through messages or posts. • Encouraging or daring someone to self-harm or consider suicide. • Sharing someone's intimate or private images and videos without their consent (authentic or digitally manipulated/deepfake).
Reporting Rules	• For any online safety incident, staff must select the specific type in the record details section of the form: online bullying, harassment and discrimination; impersonation; image-based abuse; digitally generated images; violent or extremist content; other. • If the incident involves illegal activity, eSafety concerns (such as image-based abuse), sexually explicit content, or meets the threshold for a critical incident, staff must immediately escalate the matter to school leadership so it can be reported to School Operations, which may require notification to WorkSafe.	

Source: ACT Education, July 2026. *Minor and Major Behaviour Definitions,* pp.13-14