



SNOWY  
MOUNTAINS  
GRAMMAR  
SCHOOL

CHALLENGE **BELONG** EXPLORE

# Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy

Governance



## Document Information

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# 1 Background Information

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## 1.1 Device Ownership

SMGS accepts that some parents give their children mobile phones and mobile devices to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. Parents may also be concerned about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone/mobile device gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

The widespread ownership of mobile phones (and similar devices such as tablets or smart watches) among students requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that such mobile devices are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones and other mobile devices can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile devices provide (such as increased safety, selective learning opportunities) can continue to be enjoyed by our students, where identified as being appropriate to do so.

As a Day and Boarding School, SMGS accepts that boarders will have some differing needs during after school hours operation for use of mobile devices. Further information pertaining to boarding is included in this policy.

## 1.2 Bring Your Own Designated Technology (BYODT) Program

Technology-based devices come in many different forms including laptops, writable surface devices, tablets, iPods or equivalent, phones, smart watches, fitness watches, wireless Bluetooth air pods and headphones to name some of the mainstream devices.

At SMGS, Kindergarten to Year 4 students are provided with SMGS iPads for designated use in class with wireless keyboard access. Students in these year levels do not need to bring any technology to school apart from their own personal headphones for some learning activities. Please read Section 2 for information pertaining to use of devices at school.

Year 5 to Year 12 is part of the BYODT program and are required to bring a fully charged laptop to school each day. Technology that forms part of the BYODT program for Years 5 to 12 refers to laptops with a keyboard function, or Microsoft 'surface book' style devices with both functional keypad and writable e-pen. Tablets are not considered adequate as part of the BYODT program, instead these are included as Mobile Devices.

No other mobile devices are required as part of the learning programs at SMGS for hardware needs. However, students are able to bring headphones/air pods for the purpose of listening to educational work (i.e. video clips in class as part of the teaching lesson when designated and approved by the teacher). Should students wish to, or choose to, bring other mobile devices, please refer to Section 2 for information pertaining to use of devices at school.

See further information regarding BYODT on the website:

<https://www.smgs.nsw.edu.au/programs/byodt/>

### 1.3 Other technology-based mobile devices:

Technology in the form of mobile devices refers to the following examples:

- Tablet (e.g. iPad or equivalent)
- iPod or equivalent
- Mobile phone
- Smart watch (e.g. Apple Watch)
- Headphones (including Bluetooth Devices such as Air Pods)

### 1.4 Acceptable Use Policy

SMGS has established this Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy for mobile devices that provides teachers, students and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile devices during school hours. After hours Boarding House use is included in this guide for use by boarders, supervisors and parents.

#### 1.4.1 Familiarisation with the Acceptable Use Policy

Students, their parents or carers are required to read and familiarise themselves with the Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy if students intend to bring mobile devices to school and the Boarding House. This agreement is made known to students upon commencing at the school, and/or at the start of a new school year. Parents are provided access via the school's website at any time. Students will not be permitted to use BYODT programs or mobile devices on campus or when involved in school activities unless both students and parents agree to this policy as a condition of use.

#### 1.4.2 School Excursions, Camps and Extra-curricular Activities

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile devices also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities unless otherwise indicated where some exceptions are explicitly stated.

#### 1.4.3 Boarding House

The Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy for BYODT and for mobile devices also applies to boarders while on campus and extends to after hours with some amendments in the use of devices outside of the regular school day operations. Refer to Sections 2 and 3 for further advice.

## 2 Responsibilities – Students and Parents

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### 2.1 Acceptable Use Policy

Students and their Parents or Carers should read and understand the Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy before students are permitted to bring their mobile phones and mobile devices to school including the Boarding House.

### 2.2 Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile devices to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in SMGS Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy.

### 2.3 Decision to Provide a Mobile Phone or Device

The decision to provide a mobile phone or mobile device to their child should be made by parents or carers.

### 2.4 Awareness

Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone (or other mobile device) to school. Parents should be aware that students can register their approved device through the school's network. Parents should also be aware that students can use their own data if included as part of a device plan supplied by parents. Further awareness of parents extends to students using a 'hot spot' or similar technology with peers, bypassing both the school's network and their own data allowance, as a possibility.

## 3 Acceptable Uses of Mobile Phones at School

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### 3.1 Using Mobile Phones Responsibly at School

#### 3.1.1 Mobile Devices for Junior School Students

If students have access to a mobile phone or device, students in Junior School should keep their phones or other device in their bags at all times and be used only with direct permission of the classroom teacher.

If required, students may seek permission to briefly use their phone while under the supervision of the teacher on duty, eg a message from parents regarding transport arrangements to get home.

Any urgent messages from parents can be delivered via Reception who will advise the classroom teacher in a timely manner.

Other devices are not required to be brought to school and it is recommended they remain at home.

Year 5 and Year 6 students are part of the Bring Your Own Designated Technology (BYODT) program where each student is asked to bring a fully charged laptop to school each day. Other personal devices are not required and align with the arrangements stated above in this section (3.1.1).

#### 3.1.2 Mobile Devices for Middle and Senior School Students

Students in Years 7 to 12 are not allowed to use mobile phones or mobile devices whilst on school campus, without the express permission of a teacher. If required, students may seek permission to briefly use their phone while under the supervision of the teacher on duty, eg a message from parents regarding transport arrangements to get home. Please note the same expectation applies for any school-based activity, held off campus.

Any urgent messages from parents can be delivered via Main Reception who will advise the classroom teacher in a timely manner.

Students may use a supplementary tablet in addition to the BYODT laptop, provided that it is only used for educational learning purposes and not a distraction to the learner or other learners.

Mobile devices are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

#### 3.1.3 Mobile Devices in Boarding

Boarding students are not to use mobile phones or mobile devices during Prep time. From lights out, all Year 7 to 10 boarders are to hand in their mobile devices to be locked away each night to avoid causing distraction and disruption to sleep routines. They are accessible again each morning from 7 am after a room clean check is completed by a staff member.

Boarding students in Years 11 and 12 may keep their mobile device in their room after lights out, except where a member of staff specifically requests the mobile devices are placed elsewhere to

avoid distraction and sleep disruption. All Year 11 and 12 students may opt-in to the Years 7 to 10 mobile device hand in approach from lights out where devices are locked away in the Boarding Office.

Mobile phones and mobile devices are not to be used in Prep time unless the Boarding Supervisor provides express permission for them to be used.

### 3.1.4 Smart Watches and Headphones / Air Pods

Smart watches are approved to be worn in class on a day-to-day basis for any year level, provided that they do not become any distraction to the learner wearer. They should be **set to 'do not disturb' mode** during the day to ensure they are not a distraction. This includes sporting activities for functions involving fitness applications.

Should the teacher notice the student becoming distracted during class, sport or any school activity, the student and parent will be asked for the device to be left at home and not worn to school. Smartwatches that disrupt the learner or other learners in the classroom are subject to Section 4: Sanctions and Consequences per any other mobile digital device.

Smartwatches are not permitted to be worn during tests and examinations and should be either left at home or in the student's bag.

**Headphones / Air Pods** are permitted to be brought to school and used for personal educational learning activities when directed by the teacher in the classroom such as listening to a video clip or educational application. The teacher has discretion for their use in the learning environment.

### 3.1.5 Cyberbullying

All students are reminded to protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and family. It may help younger students to keep a note of who they have given their phone number to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against cyberbullying.

Using mobile devices to bully (also known as cyberbullying) and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. Refer to the SMGS Anti-Bullying Plan.

Students and parents are reminded that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Mobile phones or other mobile devices must not be used to take photos/video of any other student or teacher without their consent. It is also prohibited to upload photos/video of other students/teachers to social media websites or email photos/videos to others if doing so would embarrass, humiliate or cause discomfort to the subject of the photo/video. Students are reminded that mobile phones are not to be used in toilets or changing rooms.

Students are reminded that they must seek official permission of school teaching staff to upload any photo/image/video of students in school uniform before posting online in any format.

### 3.1.6 Theft or damage

To avoid disputes and assist in finding owners, younger students may want to mark their mobile device clearly with their names or an identifying sticker. All students are advised to have their name and another contact number stored on the phone so that it can be more easily returned if lost.

To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, Year 10-12 students who carry mobile devices are advised to treat them as carefully as they would their wallet or purse. Mobile devices that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to the school office or other appropriate place.

SMGS accepts no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged mobile devices either arising from intentional, deliberate or accidental damage and accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile devices stolen while travelling to and from school.

It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile devices and/or passwords should not be shared.

If a mobile phone is lost or stolen, parents and students are advised to report the loss/theft to their mobile carrier so that they can de-activate the SIM card and block the mobile phone from use across all networks. Blocking a lost/stolen phone will make it unusable to anyone else within Australia.

### 3.1.7 Authority to Confiscate

The Principal or delegate may elect to confiscate a student's mobile phone where there is any suspicion that the student may have inappropriate content or there are reasonable safety concerns.

The School may elect to call in the NSW Police and/or parents/carers in some situations. The School will ensure, where possible, the student will also be present to ensure sensitivity to privacy is considered.

Where permission is denied, the NSW Police may be called to search the device instead.

## 4 Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2009

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### 4.1 Age Restrictions

Regarding age restrictions to social media platforms when the school becomes aware that a student under the age of 16 is using an age-restricted social media platform:

- Parents and/or carers will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.
- The matter will be addressed through supportive conversations focused on student safety, digital wellbeing, and responsible technology use.
- School-based consequences may apply in accordance with existing school policies and procedures relating to inappropriate use of mobile phones or digital devices.

In line with advice from the eSafety Commissioner:

- Students under 16 who hold accounts on age-restricted social media platforms are not breaking the law.
- No criminal charges or fines apply to the student or their family in these circumstances.
- Legal responsibility rests with age-restricted social media platforms, which may face penalties if they fail to take reasonable steps to prevent under-16s from having accounts.
- There is no mandatory reporting requirement for parents, educators, or police in relation to under-16 students holding such accounts.
- Age-restricted social media platforms are expected to provide clear and accessible mechanisms for reporting underage accounts.

### 4.2 Educational Use of Online Content

Consistent with guidance from the eSafety Commissioner:

- Students are permitted to view publicly available content from social media platforms (e.g. YouTube) when:
  - The content does not require the student to log into an age-restricted social media account, and
  - The content is accessed through approved learning management systems or teacher-directed activities.
- Teachers may embed or link to public video content for educational purposes, provided student access does not involve account creation or login.

## 5 Sanctions/Consequences of Unacceptable/Inappropriate Use

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All students are required to comply with the information provided within this policy as a condition of use. Members of staff will further advise students of the essential arrangements described in this policy to reinforce the need to comply and explain the rationale underpinning the policy.

The following sanctions/consequences will apply within each period of time (approximately six months):

- a) **First occasion:** The student hands over their device to the staff member immediately (and may switch it off or lock it) in doing so. The student retrieves the device at the end of the school day from the relevant Head of Middle/Senior or Head of Junior School or delegate. Further consequences are forecasted.
- b) **Second occasion:** Student is issued with an afterschool reflection.
- c) **Third or more occasions:** Student is issued with either an afterschool or Saturday reflection. The parent must retrieve the device in person from the relevant Head of Middle/Senior or Head of Junior School or delegate with a meeting to discuss ongoing breaches. The student may no longer bring the device to school until the next term has commenced.

### Additional Consequences:

- a) Any student/s caught using a mobile device to cheat in examinations or assessments will face disciplinary action. This may result in the student receiving a zero mark for that examination or assessment.
- b) Students using mobile devices to bully other students will face disciplinary action. This may include out of school hours use of the device involving our students.
- c) In situations where the Principal or their delegate considers that an allegation may be a possible breach of NSW legislation pertaining to the Telecommunications Act 2018 (NSW), the incident will be referred to the NSW police for consideration and advice to the School. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified promptly with any referral made.

## 6 Responsibilities of Students

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### 6.1 General Network Responsibilities

Students must not:

- Share their password with anyone else
- Use another student's network account
- Allow another student to use their account
- Attempt to change the network in any way
- Install/use any software on the School's network other than that provided by the School.
- Attempt to bypass security
- Store inappropriate material in their network account, including non-program files, .exe files, scripts, personal files, video files and games
- Physically connect their device via an Ethernet or USB to the network
- Violate copyright laws
- Plagiarise other people's work found on the Internet
- View, send, store or display indecent and/or offensive messages or pictures
- Use profane, abusive, impolite or sexually explicit language to communicate
- Knowingly access materials which are not consistent with the rules of school behaviour
- View, send or access material that is likely to cause offence and/or constitute a legal offence in Australia. Should a student encounter such material by accident, they should report it to their teacher immediately
- Share their password with another person under any circumstances, or logon for another person whose privileges have been withdrawn
- Access another's folders, work or files. Respect of peer's privacy is paramount
- Email or place on the Internet, any personal contact information about themselves or other people
- Use the school crest, banners or logos on the Internet
- Send spam, chain or mass mail
- Perform any activity using an anonymous or misleading identity

### 6.2 Internet and Email Acceptable Use

Students will use the Internet in a responsible manner for educational purposes – for their classwork, homework and assignment research. Internet use is a privilege and students must at all times exercise careful judgment over all material that they access and communications that they make.

Students should be mindful when publishing online, that they do not breach social, religious, cultural or copyright standards.

## 7 Appendix 1

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When conducting investigations of any kind, staff will endeavour to ensure that the investigation is procedurally fair and unbiased. The investigation will be conducted without undue delays and maintain confidentiality to limit the period of uncertainty for those involved.

The School does not make available its investigation notes or information pertaining to any matter involving student or staff investigations of any kind to protect the privacy of individuals and to further minimise any adverse impact on their wellbeing. Investigation notes remain the sole property of the School in all instances. All notes recorded and stored by School Counsellors whether registered Psychologist's or otherwise, are and remain the School's sole property at all times.

## 8 Student Agreement

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I have read and understand the Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy.

I understand that the school's ICT network provides me with access to a range of essential learning tools, including the Internet. I understand that the Internet can connect me to useful information stored on computers around the world.

While I have access to the School's ICT network:

- I will only use it for educational purposes
- I will not undertake or look for anything that is illegal, dangerous or offensive
- I will not reveal my password or allow anyone else to use my school account
- I will not reveal personal information, either my own or that relating to any other member of the school community
- I will not use the network to annoy or offend anyone else
- I understand that if the school determines that I have contravened this policy, appropriate action will be taken which may include loss of access to the network and Internet for a period of time

## 9 Parent/Carer Agreement

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I have read and understood the Acceptable Use of Network, Devices and Mobile Phones Policy.

I understand that the School provides my child with access to the School's network and the Internet for educational purposes. I understand that internet access gives my child access to information on computers around the world and that the school cannot control what is on those computers, and that a small proportion of that information can be illegal, dangerous or offensive.

- I accept that, while the school will always exercise their duty of care, protection against exposure to harmful information also depends on responsible use by my child.
- I will ensure that my child understands and adheres to this policy.
- I give my permission for those of my children enrolled at the school to access and use the school's ICT network (including the internet) in accordance with this policy.
- I understand that a breach of this policy by my child may result in the loss of access to the ICT network and Internet.