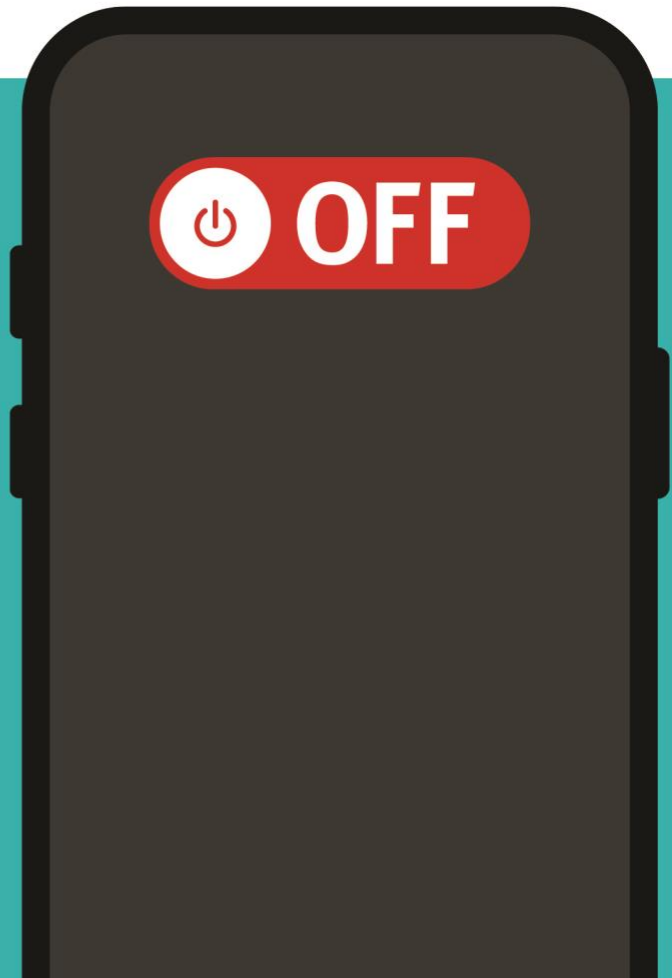


School staff

'Away for the day' – Frequently asked questions

Phones
away
for the day
from 2024



Mobile phones and wearable devices

To assist schools in their communication with parents and carers around the implementation of 'away for the day' procedure, the following frequently asked questions and their answers can be adapted to suit a school's local implementation approach.

When does 'away for the day' begin?

From Term 1 2024, all state school students must keep their mobile phones switched off and 'away for the day' during school hours.

Wearable devices, such as smartwatches, can be worn however notifications must be switched off so that phone calls, messages and other notifications cannot be sent or received during school hours.

Why are students being asked to put their phone away for the day?

This approach is being implemented in all Queensland state schools to help:

- reduce distractions in the classroom
- increase face-to-face interactions between students
- promote student health and wellbeing
- reduce the potential for student exposure to negative impacts of the digital world, such as cyberbullying.

What devices are covered under 'away for the day'?

Mobile phones and wearable devices include all mobile phones, smartwatches, handheld devices and other emerging technologies which have the ability to connect to telecommunication networks or the internet.

What about tablets and laptops?

'Away for the day' does not apply to personal or school-owned devices, such as iPads, tablets or laptops, that are approved for educational use as part of the school's Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

How will student phones be stored during the day?

Schools, in consultation with their community, will make local decisions about how and where student mobile phones will be stored during the school day. This will look different in every school.

For example, smaller primary schools may implement a system where students hand their phone into the office for the duration of the school day. In larger high school settings, the phone may be switched off and stored in the student's school bag, locker or pocket.

More than 95% of state schools already implement phone restrictions, with examples of current phone storage management approached including:

- on their person (e.g. in student's pocket or pencil case)
- in the student's school bag
- in a lockable pouch
- in student lockers
- in a secure location, such as a locked cupboard in the school office.

Will funding be made available to schools to purchase storage management solutions?

Each school will make a local decision about how and where students will store their mobile phone during school hours. Under existing policy, more than 95% of state schools already have policies that restrict the use of mobile phones for students during the school day.

Schools who decide to implement a secure storage solution will be able to use school funds for this purchase. A purchasing and procurement guide is available in OnePortal to assist schools with this decision-making process.

Will there be exemptions for students who use a phone / wearable device to manage a health condition?

Yes, exemptions will be made available for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device for health monitoring purposes. This should be documented in their health care plan in accordance with the [Managing students' health support needs at school procedure](#).

Will there be exemptions for students who use a phone / wearable device as an adjustment to access and participate in the curriculum?

Yes, exemptions will be made available for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device for learning, medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons.

This may include scenarios where:

- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed reasonable adjustment for a student with disability or learning difficulties
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used by the student as an augmentative or alternative communication system or as an aide to access and participate in the environment e.g. navigation or object/people identification applications
- the mobile phone or wearable device is used as an agreed adjustment for a student with English as an additional language or dialect
- students in Years 11 and 12 are applying for Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments (AARA) for assistive technology.

Approved exemptions, including details of how and when the student may access their phone or wearable device, should be documented in the student's OneSchool Support Provisions tab and communicated to school staff, including temporary relief staff.

Will students be able to use their phone for learning purposes, or in subjects that require technology?

Each school, in consultation with their school community, will determine whether teachers may give permission for students to use their mobile phone or wearable device in the classroom, for a specific and agreed educational purpose.

Will students be able to use their phone / wearable device to make school payments?

Each school, in consultation with their school community, will determine whether the use of mobile devices to make payments, including for tuckshop, uniform shop and office payments, will be permitted under their school's local implementation approach.

Should schools choose not to implement these exemptions, a range of other payment options will continue to be available for students such as, cash, debit or credit card, online ordering or pre-loaded student cards.

Who is responsible for student phones during the day?

If a student chooses to bring a phone to school, they will be responsible for the mobile phone during the school day.

Can students use their phone / wearable device at excursions and camps?

Mobile phones and wearable devices are not to be used during school activities such as representative sport, camps and excursions, unless an exception is made by the principal.

Principals may determine to allow students access and use of mobile phones and wearable devices during school representative sports, camps or excursions at specified and supervised times and document this decision in accordance with the [School excursions procedure](#).

Will there be statewide guidelines regarding consequences for students who do not follow this procedure?

Every Queensland state school is required to develop a *Student Code of Conduct* that details staff responsibilities to support students to understand and meet behavioural expectations of the school, and guidance on the application, where required, of disciplinary consequences.

The *Student Code of Conduct* must include an explanation of the local school approach on the use of mobile phones and wearable devices by students. This section should detail clear expectations for parents and students about what devices are allowed at school, how they are to be used, and the possible consequences for failing to meet the stated expectations.

Supporting responsible use of mobile phones and other devices

In determining the local school approach on possible consequences, it is necessary to ensure that responses are proportionate and equitable and takes into consideration the individual circumstances of each student. This means making decisions that are reasonable for the situation. Some examples include:

- providing a verbal reminder to the student or class about expected behaviour
- directing the student to place the mobile phone in storage (e.g. bag, locker, pouch)
- directing the student to switch off notifications on their wearable device
- removing the device temporarily and returning to the student or requesting their parent collect the device at the conclusion of the school day

- applying a detention for a defined period of time (e.g. lunchtime)
- enrolling a student in eSmart program to complete Digital Licence or similar course, and/or
- increasing staff supervision of use in circumstances where the student requires access to their mobile phone or wearable device for medical, disability and/or wellbeing reasons. For example, students who use smartphone apps for health monitoring and management.

Mobile phones and wearable devices that have been temporarily removed from the student must be stored and retained in accordance with the department's [Temporary removal of student property by school staff procedure](#).

Schools are encouraged to consider preventative measures such as the development of a whole-school approach that promotes the safe, respectful and positive use of mobile phones and other technology through delivery of the Australian Curriculum and specific programs focused on digital literacy.

When managing inappropriate online behaviours or reputation management incidents, the primary concern must be the safety and wellbeing of the students and/or staff members involved. Further guidance on responding to online incidents can be found in the [Online incident management guidelines for school leaders](#) and [How to manage online incidents that impact your school](#) flowchart.