

Parent and carers

‘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.

Can my child take their phone with them when travelling to and from school?

Yes, students are allowed to bring their mobile phone or wearable device to school. Students will be able to use their phone outside of school hours to support safe travel, and to make contact with parents, friends and part-time employers.

Can my child still bring wearable devices to school?

Wearable devices such as smart watches 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.

My child's phone does not connect to the internet, will they be allowed to use their phone?

No. Any phone that has the ability to connect to telecommunication networks or the internet must be switched off and away for the day.

My child uses their phone / wearable device to manage and monitor a health condition. Can they still use it?

Yes, exemptions will be made available for students who require access to their mobile phone or wearable device for health monitoring purposes.

Please speak with the school principal regarding processes for requesting an exemption.

My child uses their phone / wearable device as an adjustment to access and participate in the curriculum. Can they still use it?

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.

Please speak with the school principal regarding processes for requesting an exemption.

Will my child still get to use their phone for learning purposes, or in subjects that require technology?

In some circumstances, teachers may give permission for students to use their mobile phone or wearable device in the classroom, for a specific and agreed educational purpose. In this

instance, teachers will ensure that students only use the phone for the agreed purpose, then at the conclusion of the activity, switch it off and put it away again.

My child forgot their lunch, how will I contact them?

You can continue to contact your child through existing school processes, such as phoning the school office.

How will I contact my child at school in the event of an emergency?

In the event of an emergency, you will still be able to contact your child through existing school processes, such as phoning the school office.

How will my child contact me while they are at school?

If your child becomes unwell or experiences an issue during the school day, it is important that they report to a staff member in the first instance. Staff will follow appropriate school processes and make contact with parents and carers.

In the event of an emergency at school, the school will follow their Emergency Response Plan to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff, which includes processes for communicating with parents and carers.

My child has a part-time job, how will their employer contact them?

Students are permitted to bring their mobile phones to school; however, they must be switched off and put 'away for the day' during school hours. It is important that your child notifies their employer that they will not be able to receive or respond to messages and calls during school hours. After school hours, students will be able to check for messages from their employers.

In some instances, where your child contributes financially to the household, exemptions may be available. Please speak with the school principal regarding this matter.

Will my child 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.

Can my child use their phone while they are on excursions?

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

If this is the case, information will be included in the excursion permission form.

Where will my child store their phone during the day?

Each school, in consultation with their community, will make decisions about how and where student mobile phones will be stored during the school day. Examples of school approaches to mobile phone storage include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

Contact your child's school if you are unsure how they will be required to store their phone.

Who is responsible for my child's phone during the day?

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