



Device Policy Update For August 2026

From Our Mission Statement

At HeadStart, our mission is to empower students to become courageous, inquisitive, principled individuals who can cultivate their own success and wellbeing whilst making a positive contribution to their communities.

Current Policy

The use of mobile phones, iPods, MP3 music players or similar personal listening devices are not permitted during school hours for all students up to and including Year 11 from 8.00am until the end of the school day, 3.20pm (3.00pm on Friday) unless asked to do so or permitted by a teacher. Students can use their laptops during the school day when not in lessons, but they are not allowed to use them for gaming.

Current Policy

Students are permitted to bring mobile phones to school but they must not be used during school hours, including break times. Students are responsible for the safekeeping of their devices.

If students are seen using the devices inappropriately or at inappropriate times, may have them confiscated and if repeated, may only be retrieved by the student's parent.

The school accepts no responsibility for any damage that may occur whilst the device has been confiscated.

What do other Schools do?

1. Nothing!
2. No phones in class
3. Only use phones in class with teachers permission
4. Keep phones in bags or lockers unless permission given by teacher
5. Hand in mobile phones on arrival
6. Lockboxes for phones on arrival
7. Complete ban on mobile phones on site

Changing Concept of our Policy

Changes

- Move from a “restricted use” policy, to a “**device-free environment**”
- All devices must be switched off and kept out of sight (either in lockers or bags) from the moment students arrive until the end of the school day. This includes airpods and headphones.

Why Change?

- A growing body of global research highlighting the significant risks that unrestricted phone access poses to adolescent development.
- Parent, teacher and student consultations.

Research Base

How long do we spend on our phones each day?

How many times do we unlock our phone each day?

What do we do when there is a notification?

Research Base

Screen Time Usage by Age Group:

- Adults (Global): ~6.5 hours
- Teenagers (13–18): ~8 to 9 hours
- Tweens (8–12): ~5.5 hours
- Children (2–8): ~2 to 3.5 hour

Average Number of Screen Unlocks per day:

- 110 - Android
- 80 - iPhone

Research Base

Protecting Academic Focus

Recent research published in [Frontiers in Psychology \(2025\)](#) highlights that excessive mobile phone use for entertainment is directly associated with lower academic grades.

[UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report](#) further notes that it can take a student up to 20 minutes to refocus on deep learning after being distracted by a single notification.

By removing these distractions, we are giving our students their "cognitive bandwidth" back.

Research Base

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

A [2024 World Health Organisation \(WHO\) study](#) across 44 countries found a sharp rise in "problematic social media use," with over 11% of adolescents showing addiction-like symptoms. Data indicates that students who spend more than three hours a day on personal devices face double the risk of depression and anxiety.

A phone-free school day provides a vital "digital detox," reducing the pressure of "FOMO" (fear of missing out) and the constant urge to check for social validation.

Social Development

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

Encouraging Real World Socialisation:

School is a critical time for developing face-to-face social skills. When phones are present during break and lunch times, we see a marked decrease in physical activity and genuine conversation.

We want our hallways and playgrounds to be spaces for laughter, debate, and connection, not rows of students staring silently at screens.

New Policy (All)

The use of personal electronic devices (including mobile phones, tablets, laptops, MP3 music players, smart watches and headphones/similar personal listening devices) is strictly prohibited for all students up to and including Year 11, from the moment of entry to school until the end of the school day (3.20 pm; 3.00 pm on Friday).

For the purposes of clarity, this means devices should be in bags, lockers or cubbies at all times.

New Policy (Primary Specific)

In the case of a Primary student attending an ECA after school, the end of the school day is at the conclusion of the ECA.

The use of devices such as laptops, tablets, phones and smartwatches will not be allowed in Primary late pick-up.

New Policy (Exceptions)

Laptops and tablets may be used in classrooms with the explicit permission of a teacher. The use of any device is permitted **only** when a teacher specifically asks a student to do so.

Where a student needs to use a device outside of the above, they must have permission from a member of the Primary or Secondary Leadership Team.

New Policy (Exceptions)

Year 12 and 13 students are permitted a reasonable use of electronic devices only within the Sixth Form Common Room during break times and study periods. Devices found outside of the Sixth Form Common Room during school hours will be confiscated.

Can my Child Bring a Phone to School?

Students are allowed to bring devices to school. However, phones must not be used or be visible at any time during school hours, which includes all break times. Devices must be turned off and kept securely in the student's bag.

BUT:

Any mobile phone or personal electronic device seen in use or visible during school hours **will be immediately confiscated.** (No Warnings)

Collection of Confiscated Devices

Devices confiscated from students will be taken to the relevant Head's Secretary:

- Devices confiscated from Primary students (Years 1 to 6) will be taken to the Primary Secretary.
- Devices confiscated from Secondary students will be taken to the Secondary Secretary.

Students may collect confiscated devices **at the end of the school day.**

Repeated Confiscation

In cases of repeated confiscation, **parents** will be required to collect the phone instead of the student.

The school is not responsible for any damage that may occur to a device while it is under confiscation. Students are solely responsible for the safekeeping of their devices at all times.

Contacting Home

Primary students needing to contact home should follow the established procedure, which requires an approval slip to be signed by the homeroom teacher, and telephoning home via the main school office.

Secondary students needing to contact home during school hours must do so via the Secondary school secretary.

Cafe Payments

Students will **only** be allowed to make **cash** payments in the cafe.

No QR codes & scans will be allowed for students.

Contacting Your Child

Many parents value the peace of mind that comes with their child having a phone for the journey to and from school. We are not banning the possession of phones for travel; we are simply ensuring they do not interfere with the school day.

In the event of an emergency, parents can contact the school office at 076 510 623. We will ensure your child is reached immediately.

Questions?

The new policy is effective **Friday 21st August** at HSC
(Chaofah City Campus)

The new policy is already effective at HSN
(Cherngtalay Campus)