



Cherrybrook Technology High School



Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Procedure

Purpose

This procedure guides student use of digital devices and online services at our school.

The NSW Government announced restrictions on the use of mobile phones in NSW high schools which commenced in Term 4, 2023.

Our school acknowledges the educational value of digital devices and online services in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes and student wellbeing. We also recognise that they may cause harm if used inappropriately and that we need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

Cherrybrook Technology High School has changed the way mobile phones are accessed by students during the school day. These procedures promote the learning, safety and wellbeing of students and the management of any risk of harm and distraction from using digital technology accessed via a mobile phone, smartwatch or other personal electronic device. Based on consultation among students, staff and the school community, Cherrybrook Technology High School has made the decision to implement the “**Off and Away**” strategy for all students.

Scope

This procedure provides a consistent framework for the safe, responsible and respectful use of digital devices and online services by students in our school. It sets out the shared responsibilities of school staff, students and parents and carers. It also provides a framework to manage potential risks to student safety and wellbeing.

This procedure covers student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This procedure covers using school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services.

The Procedures

For the purposes of these procedures, ‘mobile phones and other personal electronic devices’ includes smart watches and all other electronic devices (including iPods and other branded tablets), as well as their associated listening accessories – such as, but not limited to, headphones, ear pods and earbuds. These procedures are outlined to manage student use of these devices at Cherrybrook Technology High School.

The aim of this policy is to provide:

- A safe environment to learn without inappropriate mobile phone use or distractions.
- Greater opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtime.

Rationale

While mobile phones and other such devices have significant advantages for the broader community, their use in schools is highly problematic. In schools, mobile phones are significant distractors to learning and contribute to a student’s cognitive load. They can also pose a significant risk to the safety and wellbeing of students through unfiltered/unsupervised access to the internet and social networking platforms used to inform this policy can be found at the end of this document.

Use of mobile phones or other personal electronic devices

Students will have their device immediately confiscated, and further disciplinary action will follow if:

- They use their device in class (excluding laptops) or in the playground without permission.
- The device is used to bully, intimidate, or otherwise harass other people through any voice call, text message, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the device.
- Students use digital devices to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the school's operation.
- Students use devices to capture or distribute images, video or sound without permission.
- The device has been used to contravene the law.

Student Expectations

- Students may not use mobile phones and other personal electronic devices while on school grounds at any time. 'School grounds' extends to school excursions, sports carnivals and other events at the school or off-site where an approved school activity takes place unless otherwise advised.
- Mobile phones are to be **'off and away all day'** from when students enter school grounds in the morning until they are in the designated bus line area or have left school grounds at the end of the day. This includes before school and at break times.
- Students must switch their smartwatch to 'aeroplane mode' for the duration of the school day.
- BYO or school-issued laptops are NOT part of the ban. However, these devices are **not to be accessed before school or during break time in the playground**. Students who wish to use laptops at these times may do so in the library, the Covered Outdoor Learning Area (COLA), or a classroom under the supervision of a teacher. Teachers may also request or allow students to use listening accessories with their laptops as required for learning activities.
- Students will place their mobile phone or electronic device into the **Phone Breach Envelope** (Appendix 3) immediately if asked by a teacher or member of staff if instructed. The envelope will be delivered by the student to the Deputy Principal, who will enter the phone on the Daily Phone Register and securely store the device in the designated Mobile Phone Safe located in the front office. Failure to follow the discipline code will incur more severe consequences, including Formal Caution to Suspend or a Suspension, for persistent failure to follow school procedures and the Schools Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Students are responsible for any mobile phone or similar device brought to school. The school or staff will not be responsible for their loss, theft, or damage. Students who bring their devices to school do so at their own risk.
- **Purchasing at the canteen** - Students must use a card/cash to pay for purchases. Students and parents are encouraged to use Flexi Schools to pre-order before coming to school. Phones or watches are not to be used for purchases.

Exceptions/Accommodations

A small number of exceptions/exemptions may be made. These exemptions will only be available for:

- **Health-related exemptions** can be sought by parents/carers by contacting the principal and completing the Mobile Phone Exemption Application (Appendix 4). In the case of a health condition, a letter from a medical professional stating when and how the mobile phone will be used and specifically when it will be required. The Deputy Principal will work alongside parents and complete the Phone Exemption Plan. For example, the Plan may outline a process by which students check their phones as required in consultation with the Deputy Principal Wellbeing. Families of students who require exemption will be referred to the Phone Exemption Flow Chart (Appendix 4).

Note: No Phones are to be used for Canteen Purchases, including those exempted.

Parent or Caregiver expectations

In accordance with the procedures, parents/carers will:

- Contact the school Front Office to pass on messages rather than contacting a student directly on their device (for acceptable reasons only, students will be permitted to use a phone in the front office to contact their parents/carers under the supervision of the Deputy Principal).
- Understand that the school takes no responsibility for loss or damage to phones or personal electronic devices.
- Work collaboratively with the school and help reinforce Cherrybrook Technology High School's Use of Mobile Phone (Personal Devices) Procedures with their child/ren.

Consequences for Unauthorised Use of a Device

- If requested by a teacher or staff member, students will immediately place their mobile phone or electronic device into the **Phone Breach Envelope** (Appendix 3). The envelope will be delivered by the student to the Deputy Principal, who will enter the phone on the Daily Phone Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe.
- Consequences will be applied according to the school's Behaviour and Discipline policy. These include but are not limited to the following:
 - Confiscation of the device until the end of the day.
 - Placement on the Level System and afterschool detention.
 - Confiscation of the device until such time as their parent or caregiver can attend school to collect the device.
 - Issuing of a Formal Caution to Suspend or a Suspension, for persistent failure to follow the procedures of this policy and the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
 - Withdrawal of a student's privilege to bring their phone to school.

It is appropriate to confiscate devices from students when:

- Students have failed to meet the school's expectations regarding the appropriate use of mobile phones or other personal electronic devices.
- Having and using phones is contrary to this policy.
- It is necessary to examine the device as there are reasonable grounds to suspect inappropriate material may be on the device. Senior Executive will be involved in such incidents.
- In cases where students have bullied, threatened or harassed other students or staff via a device or where the device has been used to film, take photographs or display inappropriate material.

Discipline and Student Behaviour Management

1. **In class**, any student with a phone/device out of their bag must place the device in a CTHS Phone envelope, clearly marked with the student's details and phone condition. The teacher will record on Sentral a Phone Breach. The envelope will be delivered by the student to the Deputy Principal, who will enter the phone on the Daily Phone Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe. The student will be given a Deputy Principal pass marked with the time and will return to class. In the first instance, the phone will be returned to the student by a Deputy Principal at the end of the school day.
2. **In the playground**, students with a phone/device out of their bag will be instructed to place their phone in a CTHS Phone Breach Envelope. The student will deliver the envelope to the Deputy Principal, who will enter the phone on the Daily Phone Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe. In the first instance, the phone will be returned to the student by a Deputy Principal at the end of the day. (Teacher records incident on Sentral – Mobile Phone Breach).

3. **Students who fail to cooperate with the above process** will be referred immediately to the Head Teacher faculty or Head Teacher on duty. The envelope will be delivered by the student to the Deputy Principal, who will enter the phone on the Daily Phone Register and securely store the device in an Admin safe, who records on the CTHS Phone Register and places the device in an Admin safe. The Deputy Principal will contact the parent/carer, and the student will be referred to the Behaviour and Discipline Procedures. The Deputy Principal will organise to collect the device pick up with the parent (Parent/Student by arrangement with DP). A mobile phone breach will be recorded on Sentral by the Teacher. In addition, due to the continued behaviour, a Negative Incident is created by the Deputy Principal (Continued Disobedience- failure to follow instructions), and the Phone Breach is referred by the teacher to Deputy – HT adds additional actions.
4. **Students who fail to follow the Head Teacher's instructions** will be referred immediately to the Deputy Principal. The Deputy Principal will confiscate the phone and contact the parent/carer to organise for collection of the device. Persistent failure to follow instructions and follow reasonable requests will be referred to the Deputy Principal. Consequences may include Formal Caution to Suspend or a Suspension for persistent failure to meet the Procedures of this Policy and the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
5. **Students with multiple mobile phone breaches** or device misuse entries will be referred to the Deputy Principal. An improvement plan will be formulated in partnership with parents/carers. This may include consequences, such as a Formal Caution to Suspend or a Suspension for persistent failure to meet the procedures of this policy and the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

Evaluation

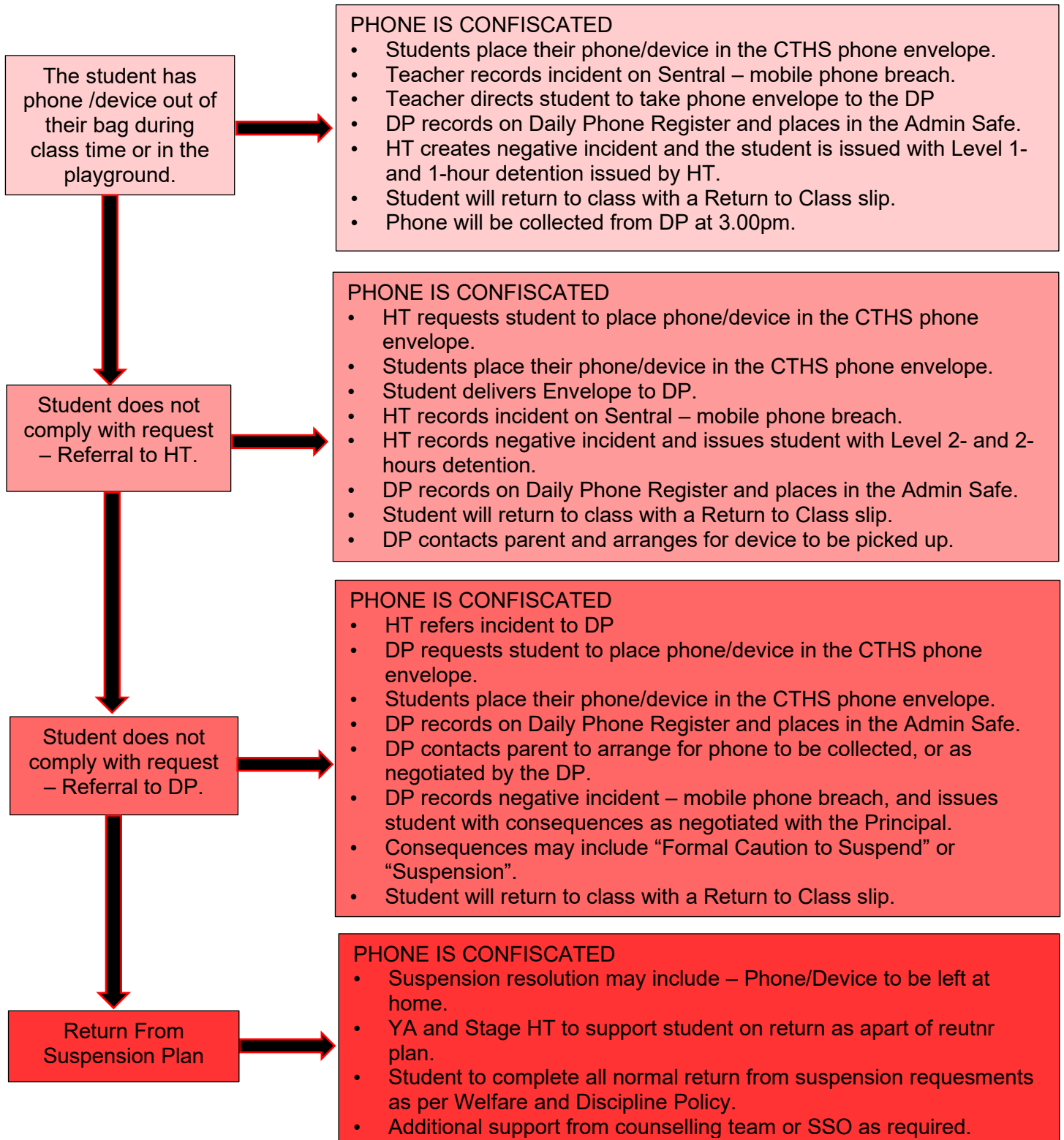
This policy will be reviewed in the first year of implementation and subsequent years on a 3-year cycle. The procedures will also be reviewed considering changes to the NSW DoE Policy on Mobile phones.

Implementation of the procedures and timeline

- **Term 3 2023 Week 7**
 - Letters to all parents outlining the policy and procedures. All Students are informed of the policy.
 - Student Handbook updated, along with all online platforms and communications.
- **The remainder of Term 3 2023:** Communications continued with further information and reminders to students and parents.
- **Term 4 2023 Week 1 and 2:** Executive welcome students at all gates, reminding them of the new policy. This will continue as needed.
- **Term 4 Week 8:** The school surveyed and consulted with students, parents, and staff on the progress of the procedures and amendments were made as recommended.

Appendix 1. Cherrybrook Technology High School – Mobile Phone Procedures

- **Students may not use mobile phones** and other personal electronic devices while on school grounds at any time. 'School grounds' extends to school excursions, sports carnivals, and other events at the school or off-site where an approved school activity takes place unless otherwise advised.
- **Mobile phones are to be 'off and away all day'** from the time students enter school grounds in the morning until they are in the designated bus line area or have left school grounds at 3.00pm. This includes before school and at break times.
- **'Mobile phones and other personal electronic devices'** include smart watches (permitted on aeroplane mode) and all other electronic devices (including iPods and other branded tablets), as well as their associated listening accessories – such as, but not limited to, headphones, ear pods and earbuds. For further detailed information, please refer to the CTHS Mobile Phone policy.



Appendix 2. Research - Mobile phone use in the classroom

Extensive research is emerging on the use of mobile phones by young people. Included below is an edited review of the available literature.

1. **How smart is it to allow students to use mobile phones at school?** Reports on a study of mobile phone bans in England. The bans led to:
 - Improvements in student achievement
 - An increase in test scores for students aged 16 by an amount equal to adding five extra days to the school year.
 - Lower-achieving students made the greatest improvements.

<https://theconversation.com/how-smart-is-it-to-allow-students-to-use-mobile-phones-at-school-40621>

2. **Mobile phones in the classroom: A helpful or harmful hindrance?** outlines recent research. Phones can be a distraction, and their removal from the classroom can improve student performance. Students who did not use smartphones in a lecture wrote 62 per cent more information in their notes and recalled more information than peers who were using their phones.

<https://www.drkellyallen.com/post/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a-helpful-or-harmful-hindrance>

3. **'Schools need to react quickly': Education expert urges smartphone ban discusses smartphone use in schools.** According to Finnish expert Dr Sahlberg, smartphone distraction is one of the main reasons why Australia is sliding down the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/schools-need-to-react-quickly-education-expert-urges-smartphone-ban-20180525-p4zhm4.html>

4. Research – Cognition and smartphone use

Smartphones and Cognition: A Review of Research Exploring the Links between Mobile Technology Habits and Cognitive Functioning is a review of academic research on mobile phones. The review looked for evidence of the effects of smartphone use on cognition. It reported that habitual smartphone use may have a negative and lasting impact on users' ability to:

- Think
- Remember
- Pay attention
- Regulate emotion.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5403814/>

5. **The Mere Presence of Your Smartphone Reduces Brain Power**, Study Shows The research finds it does not matter whether a smartphone is on or off or lying face up or face down on a desk - having a smartphone within sight or within easy reach reduces a person's ability to focus and perform tasks because part of their brain is actively working not to pick up or use the phone.

<https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power/>

6. **Dopamine, Smartphones & You: A Battle for your Time**, a Harvard University blog, discusses our desire to connect and seek validation through technologies and how this can lead to anxiety, poor sleep, and unsuccessful social interactions. The blog explains how mobile phone content can influence our 'dopamine pathways and lead to a battle for increasing the users' time.

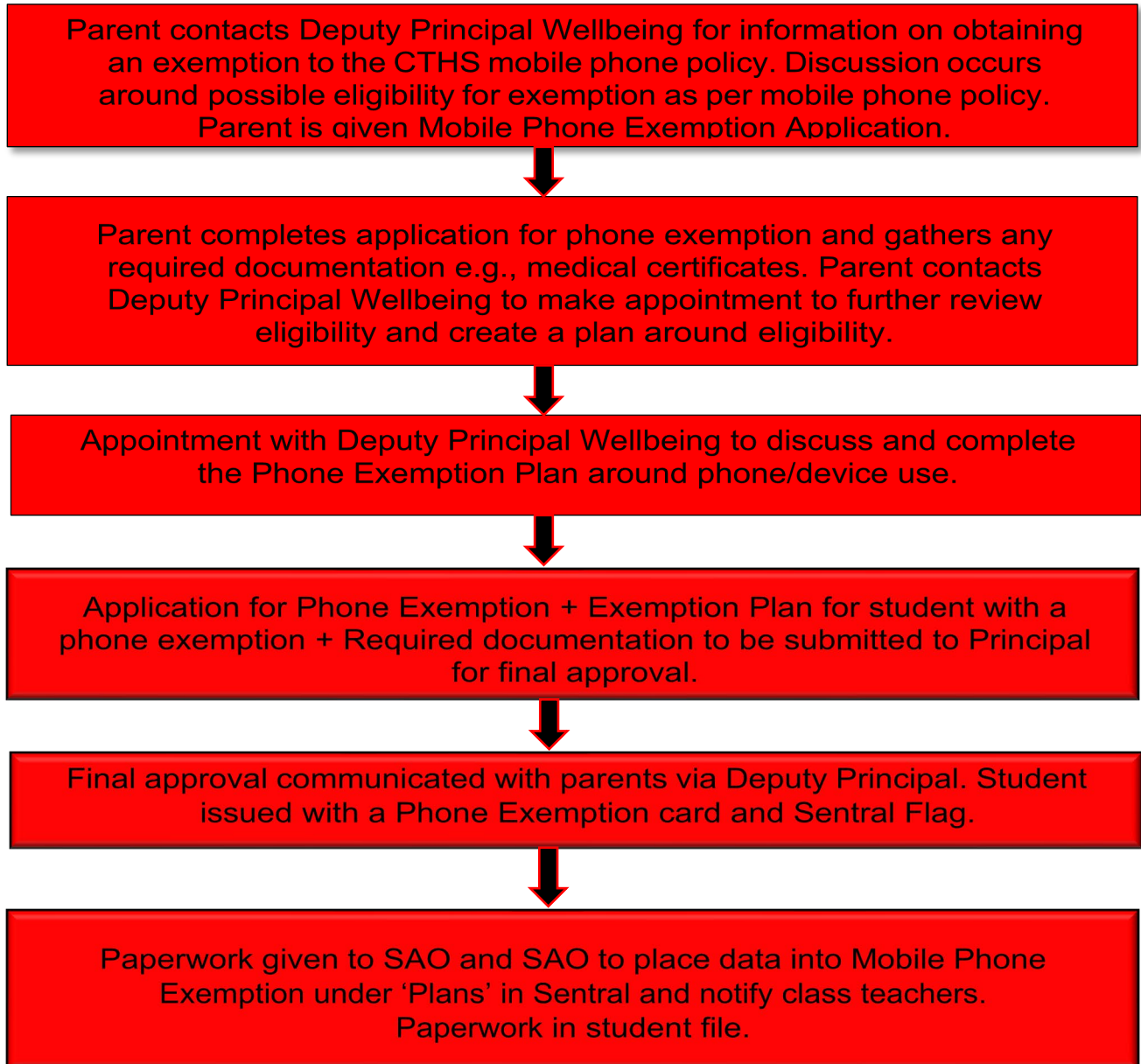
<http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2018/dopamine-smartphones-battle-time/>

7. **The Social Dilemma** is a Netflix documentary-drama hybrid that examines the many ways social media and social networking companies have manipulated human psychology to rewire the human brain and what it means for society in general. One of the most striking sections of the documentary is the one that touches on the vulnerability of teenagers who use platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, and multiple others every single day and have been moulded by social media's influences. This section of the film is highlighted by statistics on depression, anxiety, and even suicide rates of teenagers that correlate with the rise of social media.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y_KiBxKePI&feature=youtu.be

Appendix 4 Phone Exemption Flow Chart, Application and Plan

4.1 MOBILE PHONE EXEMPTION – FLOW CHART



4.2 Application for Phone (Personal Devices) Exemption



**Cherrybrook
Technology
High School**

**28-44 Purchase Road
Cherrybrook NSW 2126**

Telephone
02 9484 2144

Email
cths@cths.nsw.edu.au

Website
<https://cths.nsw.edu.au>

Principal
Mr M Townsend

Deputy Principals
Mr B Clements
Mrs A Gatt
Mr M Fisher

Name:		Year:	
Parent/Carer Name:			
Parent Contact No:			
Medical Condition Requiring Exemption:			
Outline what is specifically needed for this exemption:			
Is medical information/ evidence attached?		YES / NO	
Have you met with the DP to develop a plan for use?		YES / NO	
Principal Approval	YES / NO	Signature:	Date:

OFFICE USE ONLY

- Plan created in Sentral.
- Phone Exemption Card created and delivered to the student.
- Notification to the parent regarding the outcome of the exemption request.
- Student flag in Sentral created.

Key Terms

Bring your own device is an optional program where parents and carers can provide personal digital devices for use at school. Any decision to adopt a bring-your-own-device program is made by the principal in consultation with the school community. All digital devices used in schools are covered by the Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services policy. Schools retain discretion to determine the specifications of personal devices to be used at school.

Digital citizenship refers to the skills and knowledge a person needs to effectively use digital technologies in a positive way so they can participate in society, communicate with others, and create and consume digital content.

Digital devices are electronic devices that can receive, store, process and share digital information and connect to applications (apps), websites and other online services. They include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, smartwatches, smartphones, and other devices.

Digital literacy is the set of social, emotional, and technological skills and competencies that people need to understand to use digital devices and online services and to expand their opportunities for education, employment, and social participation, including entertainment.

Educational purpose is any use approved by school staff that supports student learning, wellbeing, and educational outcomes.

General capabilities are the broad collection of knowledge, skills, behaviours, and dispositions described within the Australian curriculum and NSW syllabus.

Image-based abuse occurs when intimate, nude or sexual images are distributed, or threatened to be distributed, without the consent of those pictured. This includes real, altered and drawn pictures and videos. This is a crime in NSW.

Online bullying involves using technology such as the internet or mobile devices to bully someone. Bullying behaviour has three key features. It involves the intentional misuse of power in a relationship. It is ongoing and repeated, involving behaviours that can cause harm. Bullying behaviour can also involve intimidation, victimisation, and harassment, including that based on sex, race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.

Online safety is the safe, responsible, and respectful use of digital media, devices, other technology, and online services.

Online services are any software, website or application that can gather, process, or communicate information. This includes digital classrooms, chat and messaging, online games, virtual reality, social media, and other online spaces.

Reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

School-related settings include school grounds, school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This connection may exist in situations where: there is a discussion about school taking place outside of school hours, a student is wearing their school uniform but is not on school premises, a relationship between parties commenced at school; students are online in digital classrooms; and where online contact has flow-on consequences at school, and duty of care requires the school to respond once an incident is reported.

School staff refers to school personnel who have some level of responsibility for implementing policy and the school digital devices and online service procedure. This includes principals, senior staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, school administrative staff, volunteers and contracted staff engaged by schools.