

Tēnā koutou e ngā whānau o te kura,

Thank you for your participation in the consultation on our mobile phone policy. In total, 230 members of the community completed the survey, 427 students and 34 staff. I have attached a summary of the results of this consultation for your reference.

There is strong support among staff and parents for Aquinas College amending our current policy to become a phone-free environment for certain year levels. The student vote is mixed across the various year levels, but there was greater support for a phone-free environment than expected.

*I can confirm that **Aquinas College will move to a phone-free environment for students in Years 7, 8, 9 & 10 from the start of 2023.** While Years 11, 12 & 13 students will still have access to their devices during school hours, they must be switched off and in their school bag during lessons. They may only be accessed for a defined timeframe to enhance the learning at the teacher's discretion. While this is the current policy, we will be strengthening its implementation next year.*

Across the student, staff and community vote, a considerable portion of people selected 'Other'. There was a range of views in this space, but a reasonable proportion advocated for a whole-school phone-free environment. While we are not discounting this in the future, this is not being considered at this time for the reasons outlined in the consultation rationale. We will review this position in Term 3 next year.

2023 Mobile Phone Policy - what you need to know:

Middle School Students (Years 7-10)

1. Students are not permitted to use their mobile phones at school between 8:30am – 3:20pm. While students are strongly encouraged not to bring their mobile phones to school, if they do bring them, they must be switched off and in their bags.
 - a. This is inclusive of off-site school trips.
2. If students fail to comply with this policy, the following consequences shall apply:
 - a. First offence:
 - i. The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. The student can collect it at the end of the day. Their Dean will be notified.
 - b. Second Offence
 - i. The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. The phone must be collected from their child's Dean by a parent.
 - c. Third Offence
 - i. The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. A third offence will lead to parents and the student needing to meet with the Assistant Principal responsible for Pastoral Care to collect the phone and discuss the next steps. The student will be issued an after-school service.
 - d. NB: If a student refuses to surrender their phone, the Middle School Assistant Principal will remove the student from class and organise a meeting with parents immediately.
3. Smart-enabled wearables, e.g. smart watches, must not receive notifications at school between 8:30am – 3:20pm. If they do, it is indicative that the student has failed to abide by Point One of this policy and Point Two (above) will apply.

Senior School Students (Year 11-13)

1. If students choose to bring a mobile phone, it must be switched off and in their school bag during lessons. In Science and practical Technology lessons, where bags are placed in cubby holes outside the classrooms, students can leave their phones in their bags or deposit them in the 'mobile phone box' in the classroom at the start of the lesson.
2. At the teacher's discretion, students may access their phones for a defined timeframe to enhance learning. Examples of use include, but are not limited to, using the camera, undertaking a Kahoot, and using other functions such as the stopwatch or calculator.
3. If students fail to comply with this policy, the following consequences shall apply:
 - a. First offence:
 - The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. The student can collect it at the end of the day. Their Dean will be notified.
 - b. Second Offence
 - The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. The phone must be collected from their child's Dean by a parent.
 - c. Third Offence
 - The mobile phone is to be surrendered to a staff member. The phone will be stored at the college office in a locked cupboard. A third offence will lead to parents and the student needing to meet with the Senior School Assistant Principal to collect the phone and discuss the next steps. The student will be issued an after-school service.
 - d. NB: If a student refuses to surrender their phone, the Senior School Assistant Principal will remove the student and organise a meeting with parents immediately.
4. Smart-enabled wearables, e.g. smart watches, must not receive notifications during lessons. If they do, it is indicative that the student has failed to abide by Point One of this policy and Point Two (above) will apply.

While we appreciate this decision will not be popular with the majority of our younger students, we will look forward to the learning, physical and social benefits of removing mobile phones during the school day for these students.

We will require your support as we implement this policy next year. We expect the start of the first term to be a period of adjustment before this new way of being becomes embedded. As I wrote previously, with your support in establishing consistent boundaries around the duration, content and quality of such screen use at home, this phone-free policy at school should lead our younger students to develop healthier habits around their phone use during this critical period of adolescence. Thank you for your support of this new policy.

Ngā mihi nui ki a kouotu

Matt Dalton
Principal / Tumuaki