

23rd September 2022

Dear Whānau and caregivers,

We are always acutely aware of the changing social environment that our rangatahi are having to navigate and it is vitally important for the education and wellbeing of our students that we provide a safe and engaging learning environment.

We have noticed a growing number of ākonga who are distracted in classes by their phones, who are using their phones inappropriately and who are not connecting with their peers, but rather on their phones, during lunch times and intervals.

Despite our best efforts we are finding fewer families are supporting us with Family Zone, as students, sometimes with the support of their parents, find ways to circumvent software that we instigated to protect and assist them.

This challenging context and the harm being caused to learning and wellbeing, has led us to revise our policies around phone use during the school day and we wish to make you aware of our proposed changes to student access to phones for Term 4.

The proposed restriction of access to phones as outlined below, will be trialed for our Year 9 cohort in Term 4, starting on the 17th October. This procedure has been approved by the Board of Trustees and has the support of the Parent Advisory Group.

The process will be as follows:

- For term 4 – all Year 9 students will hand their phones into student reception by 8.35am each morning, where they will be stored in wall pouches managed by Mrs Madigan
- Students will be able to collect their phones after 3.25pm at the student reception.
- Should students be leaving school before 3.25pm, they may collect their phone earlier, but if they return to the campus they have to hand their phone in again.
- Students will not be able to access their phones at all during the school day.
- Credit/eftpos/cash cards, should be stored away from the phones so students can access their cards if required.
- Parents will be able to contact their daughters either by email, texting for a text to be picked up at 3.25pm, or by ringing the school office to pass on a message
- Students who are present and have not handed in their phones will be followed up by their Dean.
- Students who choose not to bring phones to school at all – will be recorded as such, once there is written notification from their parents.
- Should students choose to hand in a 'second' phone or 'dummy' phone at student reception, or attempt other ways to circumvent our systems and keep their phone with them, we will be contacting parents and requesting a meeting. Student behavior management procedures will be followed and repeated attempts to not follow our guidelines and expectations will be escalated through the disciplinary procedures as appropriate
- As per our current policy, the responsibility for the phone stays with the student who chooses to bring it to school, while it is in their possession. The phones once handed in will be in a 'staff only', safe and monitored area.

Our Year 7 & 8 students already work under this system which has assisted with student wellbeing, minimizing the misuse of phones and aided engagement in class. Year 10 students will be asked to not have their phones in class, but will have access in between times.

Senior students will retain the ability to access their phones during the school day, and restricted access may be negotiated on an individual basis.

The misuse of phones and the consequent harm to students has reached a critical point and in the interests of keeping all our students safe, and able to learn effectively, we are prepared to put considerable resource and time into ensuring this proposed trial is successful and benefits our learning community. This proposed procedure will give students the opportunity to connect positively with their peers, engage meaningfully in class, and assist with their self management and wellbeing.

We will seek your feedback and that of the students once the trial has been underway for a period of weeks, and refine the systems as necessary.

Your support of your daughter's wellbeing and education is the cornerstone of our partnership and your assistance with this new system will be critical to its success, and the benefits for our students. We thank you in advance in anticipation of your support.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'JB' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jackie Barron MNZM
Principal
St Hilda's Collegiate School