

# Waimate High School

## *Learning for Life*



19 July 2023

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

**Subject: Board of Trustees proposal to make Waimate High School “cellphone-free”.**

As part of our ongoing commitment to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment for our students, the Board of Trustees is proposing that we adopt a cellphone-free policy at Waimate High School and to help us in our decision making we would like feedback from our community before any decision is made.

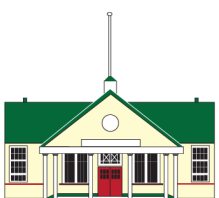
**Why are we considering this?**

Cellphones have become an integral part of our daily lives, providing us with instant access to information and facilitating communication. However, we believe that the presence of cellphones in our school environment presents several challenges that can hinder the learning process and overall well-being of our students.

While it is essential to acknowledge the potential benefits of cellphones as learning tools, we believe that the negative impact they are having outweighs these advantages. Here are some of the key reasons why we are considering making Waimate High School cellphone free:

*Minimising distractions:* Cellphones have the potential to divert students' attention away from their studies and classroom activities. By making the school cellphone free we aim to create an environment that fosters focused learning, encourages active participation, and allows teachers to deliver their lessons without interruption.

*Enhancing social interactions:* Cellphones can limit face-to-face social interactions among students. By removing cellphones, we hope to promote stronger personal connections, effective communication skills, and the development of meaningful relationships within our school community.



**RESPECT  
RESPONSIBILITY  
REAL HONESTY**  
THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOLID RELATIONSHIPS

*Preventing cyberbullying and inappropriate content:* The misuse of cellphones can lead to cyberbullying, sharing of inappropriate content, and other online safety concerns. By removing cellphones, we aim to create a safer and more secure environment for all students, reducing the risks associated with these issues.

*Encouraging physical activity and well-being:* The excessive use of cellphones can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle, which may negatively impact the physical health and overall well-being of students. By prohibiting cell phone use during school hours, we hope to encourage physical activity, engagement in sports and other outdoor activities, and a healthier lifestyle for our students.

### **What would this look like at school?**

We understand that some students need a cellphone to communicate, particularly those students who get a bus to school or students who have work commitments. Students can bring their cell phone with them to school and use it before and after school, but not at all during school hours. The cell phone must be switched off and in their bag (not pocket) or given to the office. The school office would remain the first port of call for getting messages to students. We will also provide a 'student phone' that can be accessed by students who need to contact home or work during their break times.

### **When would we like to adopt this policy?**

From Monday, 21st August 2023

### **How to give feedback**

We understand that this proposal may raise questions or concerns, and we are here to address them. We would greatly appreciate your feedback on this proposal. You can provide your feedback in the following ways:

By completing the survey that was emailed to you at the same time as this letter - click on the link in the email

Providing written feedback via email directly to the principal, Jo Hunnikin, at [jhunnikin@waimate-high.school.nz](mailto:jhunnikin@waimate-high.school.nz)

Meet with the Principal at the whole-school conferencing day to be held on Thursday, 3rd August 2023 in the library. The Principal will be available all day to discuss this in person.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation in helping us create a positive learning environment for our students. We look forward to receiving your valuable feedback. We will let you know of our decision before 14th August 2023

Kind regards,

Bryson Hargreaves

Presiding Member of the Waimate High School Board of Trustees

