



NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL
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MOBILE PHONE STRATEGY 2024

Purpose

To outline the Newcastle High School procedures on implementing the restrictions of mobile phones in accordance with the NSW Department of Education:

[Students' Use of Mobile Phones in Schools policy.](#)

While mobile phones and other such devices have significant advantages for use in the broader community, their use in schools is highly problematic. In schools, mobile phones are significant distractors to learning and can further 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. The use of technology is important, but the risks and benefits need to be managed.

Scope

From Term 4 2023 all NSW Department of Education schools are required to select a mobile phone management approach that ensures the restriction of mobile phones on school grounds. Newcastle High School has selected to use the *"Off and Away Strategy"*.

This strategy ensures that all mobile phones will be off and away for the full school day, including recess, lunch and during excursions. This means that students will have a responsibility to turn off their phone and store it safely in their school bag for the course of the school day. This is an approved NSW Department of Education strategy and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing approach to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment.

'Off and Away' at Newcastle High School

Prohibited Items

Mobile phones and wireless headphones are considered prohibited items and should not be used by a student 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. Not included in the ban are smartwatches, Ipads or other branded tablets, Windows Laptops and Apple MacBook's.

Bell to Bell

Mobile phones and accessories are to be 'off and away all day' for all students from 8:55am until 3pm (Bell to Bell) or until the student has left school grounds for the rest of the school day. This includes at break times and during excursions, extracurricular activities and sport that are off site. Students must also switch their smart watch to 'airplane mode' for the duration of the school day.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

BYOD or school issued laptops are NOT part of the prohibited device ban. Students who wish to use an approved BYOD device must do so in an appropriate manner, preferably in the library or a classroom under the direction and supervision of a teacher. Teachers MAY also request or allow students to use listening accessories with their approved BYOD device, as required for learning activities. These listening accessories must be non-wireless capability headphones, with a clear and visible connection to the intended device.

Liability

Students must take full responsibility for any mobile phone or digital device and accessories brought to school, whether they are prohibited or not. 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.

The Canteen

Students will be required to use a card or cash to pay for purchases at the canteen. Students and parents are encouraged to use Flexi Schools Canteen to pre – order prior to coming to school. Phones are not to be used for purchases during recess and lunch, but may be used before 8:55am.

Communication

If students wish to communicate with their parents/carers, they must go to the student office during a break and request for their parents to be called. In an emergency, they should see their deputy principal to make contact and/or negotiate the use of their mobile phone (if absolutely necessary).

Parents can always contact their child by calling the school office, who will send the runners with a message to the student. Alternatively, the parent can send a text message to their child's phone, which the student can see at 3pm, once the school day has ended.

Consequences

Failure to adhere to the 'Off and Away Strategy' will result in confiscation of the mobile phone or accessory. Students who have their phone or accessory confiscated may pick it up at 3pm, with permission from their parent. Repeat offenders will have further consequences implemented and require their parent to collect the item on their behalf. Repeated defiance and failure to follow the policy will result in further disciplinary action.

Exemptions

Exemptions may be required for some students for a specific educational purpose, to achieve student health and wellbeing outcomes, or as part of reasonable adjustment to enable students with specific needs to participate in education on the same basis as other students. These will be considered by the deputy principal on a case-by-case basis, and require supporting documentation from a health professional.

Any student with an exemption will have this documented in their student support plan, information communicated to relevant staff and be issued with a Mobile Phone for Learning Pass, outlining the specific nature of its use, which is to be carried at all times.

Complaints and Concerns

If a student, parent or carer has a complaint or concern about this procedure, they should first contact their relevant deputy principal. If the issue cannot be resolved, please refer to the Departments' guide for students, parents and carers making complaints about NSW public schools.

Resources and Support Materials

[Frequently Asked Questions – Off and Away](#)

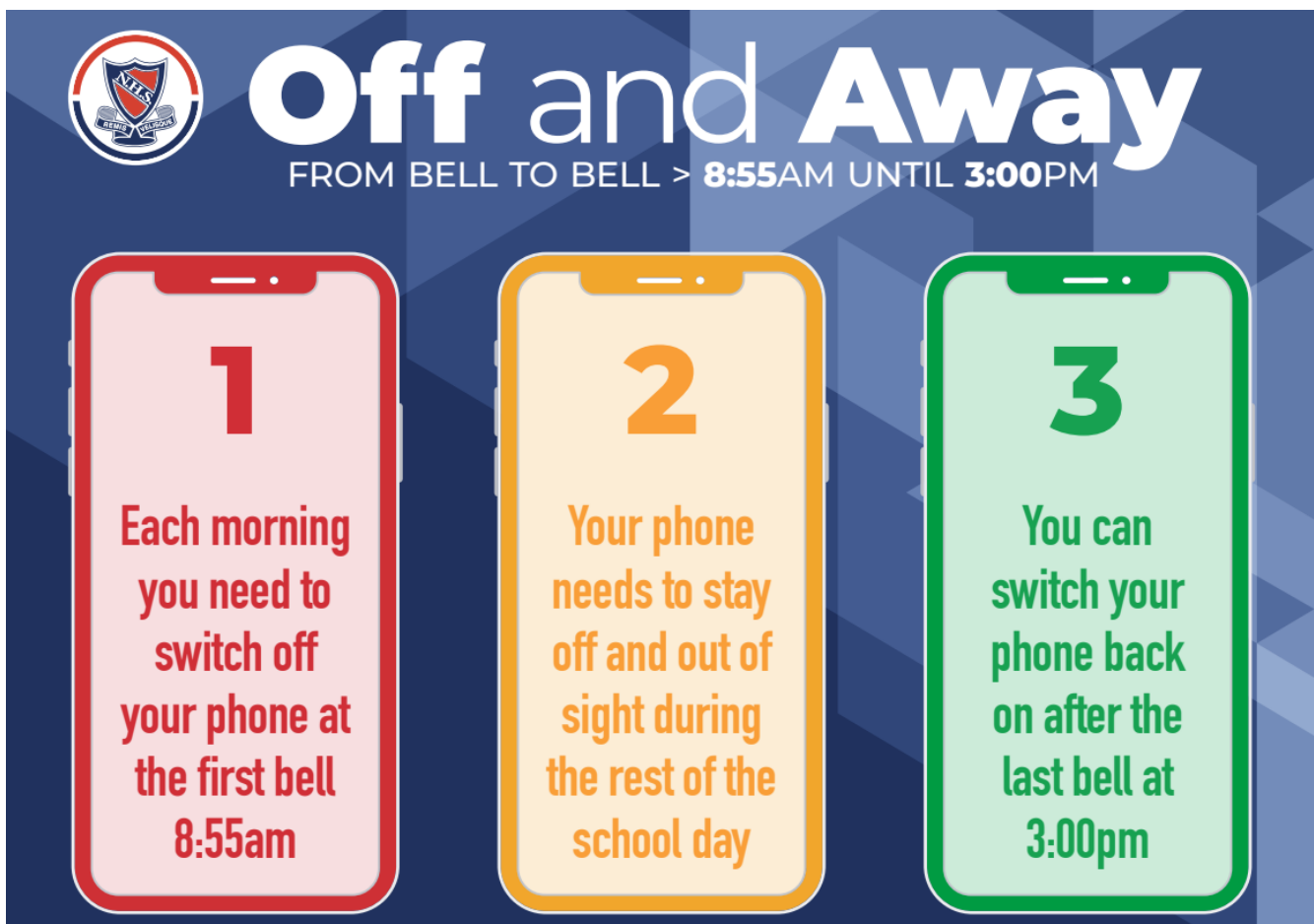
[Student use of Mobile Phones Policy](#)

[Student use of Digital Devices and Online Services Policy](#)

[Student Behaviour Policy](#)

[School Community Charter](#)

[Behaviour Code for Students](#)



The poster features the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) logo in the top left corner. The main title 'Off and Away' is in large white font, with the subtitle 'FROM BELL TO BELL > 8:55AM UNTIL 3:00PM' below it. Three smartphone-shaped boxes are arranged horizontally, each with a number and text:

- 1** Each morning you need to switch off your phone at the first bell 8:55am
- 2** Your phone needs to stay off and out of sight during the rest of the school day
- 3** You can switch your phone back on after the last bell at 3:00pm