Toowoomba SHS: Personal Technology Policy

Personal Technology Devices:

The community of Toowoomba SHS considers that the values of courtesy, consideration and respect are paramount to effective learning and teaching.

The use of personal mobile phones and associated technologies in the school environment, have the potential to cause disruption to the teaching and learning process. The rapid advances in the mobile technology arena, has equipped the user with the capability to record sound and still and/or moving images. This capability provides a means whereby inappropriate use of mobile devices usage may be deemed illegal.

Toowoomba SHS considers that irresponsible or inappropriate use of personal mobile devices during school, is prejudicial to the good order and management of the school.

Students are encouraged not to bring personal mobile devices to school, however are permitted to do so, on the proviso that they are used responsibly and appropriately. Responsible and appropriate use means:

- Personal mobile devices are not to be used during scheduled classes or assemblies, to receive or transmit messages, email, social media or voice calls
- Personal mobile devices are not to be used to send any form of communication that contains obscene language, sexually explicit material and/or threats of violence. Should a student receive such a message, he/she should ensure they keep the message as evidence and bring the matter to the attention of the school office. In these cases, the matter may be referred to Queensland Police Service.
- Students are required when using personal mobile devices, at all times be respectful of others and of themselves
- For use in classes when the classroom teacher will negotiate with students in their class as to when such a device is required to enable learning. Such equipment is bought to school at a student’s personal risk.

Failure to abide by these conditions may result in personal mobile devices being confiscated and returned at a later time, or may lead to disciplinary action as defined in the School Responsible Behaviour Plan for students. It should be noted that the school takes no responsibility for the loss or damage of any such item that students bring to school.

Parents and students should be aware of the contents of the Invasion of Privacy Act and the Telecommunication Act, which details what is considered illegal use of personal mobile technology.

Inappropriate Use

Students using personal technology devices inappropriately or during class time, will have the said device temporarily confiscated. They will be made available for collection at the end of the school day unless required to be kept for purposes of disciplinary investigation. If a device is kept by the school for the purposes of a disciplinary investigation it will only be returned to the student in the presence of a parent. Students who refuse to co-operate with reasonable direction in relation to inappropriate use will be subject to conditions of the Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students.

Devices potentially containing evidence of criminal offences may be reported to the Police. In such cases police may take possession of such devices for investigation purposes and students and parents will be
directed to contact police directly. Students who have a personal technology device confiscated more than once will not be permitted to have a personal technology device at school for at least one month, or longer if deemed necessary by the Principal.

**Mobile Telephone Etiquette**
Bringing mobile telephones to school is not encouraged, because of the potential for theft and damage and general disruption associated with them. However, if they are brought to school by students, they must be turned off and out of site during assemblies or classes including form time, sport, excursions & class changeover time. Mobile telephones may be used appropriately during breaks and before and after school. Any situations or issues arising from damage, theft, loss etc. of mobile phones are at the students' personal risk and should be addressed with the police.

**Recording voice and Images**
Every member of the school community should feel confident about participating fully and frankly in all aspects of school life without concern that their personal privacy is being invaded by them being recorded without their knowledge or consent.

A student at school who uses a personal technology device to record private conversations, ordinary school activities (apart from social functions like graduation ceremonies) or violent, illegal or embarrassing matter capable of bringing the school into public disrepute is considered to be in breach of this policy. Even where consent is obtained for such recording, the school will not tolerate images or sound captured by personal technology devices on the school premises or elsewhere being disseminated to others, if it is done for the purpose of causing embarrassment to individuals or the school, for the purpose of bullying or harassment, including racial and sexual harassment, or where without such intent a reasonable person would conclude that such outcomes may occur.

Students should note that the recording or dissemination of images that are considered indecent (such as nudity or sexual acts involving children), is against the law and if detected by the school will result in police involvement.

**Text communication**
The sending of messages that contain obscene language and/or threats of violence may be classified as cyberbullying and or harassment or even stalking, and will subject the sender to consequences and possible police investigation. Students receiving such text messages at school should ensure they keep the message as evidence and bring the matter to the attention of the Year Level DP. In these cases, The Stop Harassing Me Postcard system will be recommended.

**Assumption of cheating**
Personal technology devices may not be taken into or used by students at exams or during class assessment. Staff will assume students in possession of such devices during exams or assessments are cheating. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student who is caught using a personal technology device to cheat during exams or assessments.

**Recording Private Conversations and the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971**
It is important that all members of the school community understand that under the Invasion of Privacy Act 1971, ‘a person is guilty of an offence against this Act if the person uses a listening device to overhear, record, monitor or listen to a private conversation’. It is also an offence under the Act for a person who has overheard, recorded, monitored or listened to a conversation to which he/she is not a party to publish or communicate the substance or meaning of the conversation to others.
Students need to understand that some conversations are private and therefore to overhear, record, monitor or listen to such private conversations may be in breach of this Act, unless consent to the recording is appropriately obtained.

**Special Circumstances Arrangement**

Students who require the use of a personal technology device in circumstances that would contravene this policy (for example to assist with a medical condition or other disability or for a special project or IT based subject) should negotiate a special circumstances arrangement with the Deputy Principal or Principal.