



Dear Parents,

The following is an extract from a media release regarding mobile device use in public schools:

### NSW takes action on mobile devices in schools

13 December 2018

Mobile devices will be banned during school hours in NSW public primary schools and high schools will have the choice to opt in to a ban or introduce measures to more tightly restrict the use of devices during school hours.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Education Minister Rob Stokes said the new measures are in response to an expert review which shows rising cases of online bullying, inappropriate sharing of explicit images between students, predatory behaviour from strangers and unnecessary distraction for students.

Our school has always had a policy of no mobile phone use during school hours.

Most children of primary school age do not need a phone; however, some parents **choose** to give their child a phone before they enter high school.

This is a decision for parents but it should be one that is carefully thought out before entrusting children with a device that in some cases has resulted in unrestricted access to pornography, sharing of explicit and inappropriate images, bullying and predatory behaviour. If children are given access to a mobile phone, they need to be educated on how to use it appropriately. This education needs to be provided by the adult who is giving the child access to a phone – **their parent**. A good place for parents to access support in educating their children around cyber safety and appropriate mobile phone and internet use is the website below:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

Information on this website can help parents to decide if their child really needs (not just wants) a phone, and if they are ready for a phone.



At school, children use digital devices, provided by the school, every day. Our devices are protected by Department of Education filters and anti-virus software and children are taught the rules and regulations of using school computers and accessing the internet.

- At **Wooli Public School**, children are not permitted to use their mobile phones during school hours (this includes during recess and lunch).
  - If a child needs to use his or her phone at school for a specific reason, parents should contact the school to discuss this.
  - If parents need to get in touch with children at school they can phone the office as has always been the case.
  - It is advisable that if parents must give their child a phone then they make it a ‘dumb’ phone. That is, it should not be able to access the internet or have a camera.
  - If your child already has a smart phone, parents are advised to disable the camera and internet connectivity.
  - Nearly all social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age to access and use their services. This includes Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Musical.ly and Skype. Therefore, there should be no student at Wooli Public School with one of these accounts.
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- Please discuss these points with your child if he or she has their own phone. I stress again that most primary school aged children do not need a phone. If they need to contact home in an emergency or if parents need to contact children during school hours, this can be done through the office as it always has been. Please note this also applies to IPADS and other tablets.



Kind regards,

***Robyn Parnell***

***Principal***

***Wooli Public School***