



CELLPHONE USE IN 2023

Mobile phones are banned from Tuakau College in 2023.

From 2023 mobile phone use at Tuakau College will not be permitted by students. A major impact of COVID-19 on our students has been the increased amount of time they are now spending on devices such as mobile phones. Over the last two years, inadvertently, we have encouraged students to engage and spend more time on devices because they had to be able to learn from home. **The fallout is our students are more hooked on devices than ever.**

What goes 'hand in hand' with increased screen time is the increased misuse of the devices. We have experienced a huge increase in the misuse of mobile phones over the last two years.
We have experienced things such as:

- more online bullying, which is blatant and nasty
- more disruption to learning as students are distracted by their phone in and out of class
- more teacher abuse because students believe it is 'their right' to have and use their phone at any time of the day and when confronted with this they become disobedient and eventually verbally abuse the staff
- students are viewing pornographic photos, watching it, as well as creating nude photos of themselves and sharing it with friends who then share it on
- students saying things to others that they would never say to them face-to-face, encouraging others to misbehave, inciting violence, etc
- students are taking unsolicited photos/videos of other students and staff who do not want their photo taken and publishing these without permission
- students are taking photos of others in toilet blocks, PE changing rooms, etc, and the list goes on.

Some students have lost their sense of morality and common sense. Most of the time the school is asked to fix the problem even though much of this occurs out of school hours. We are spending a disproportionate amount of time unravelling these situations but, as a school, we do not own the problem.

To all our parents: the problem belongs to you as a parent/caregiver. Do you know what your student is doing on their phone?

Before mobile phones, students could get away from the hustle and bustle of school and the bullies. Their bedroom at home was a safe haven to hide in. Today their bedrooms have become de-privatized because they take all these issues with them to their rooms through their phones and/or other devices. They do not get a break from it. This is a contributing factor in a student's low resilience and the many mental health issues we deal with and facing on a daily basis.

As parents what can you do? Firstly; who owns the phone? Who is paying for the data? Your child's safety from the 'darknet' is paramount and we have to take action. Here are some suggestions:

- Turn the WiFi off at home.
- If they misuse their phone - take it off them!
- Limit the use of their phone during the day and night. Do not allow them to take their phone to their room
- Review what they put on their Facebook, Instagram pages, etc. Parental locks and notifications may assist with this
- Do you know who their friends are on these Apps?
- Support them if they are a victim of the abuse. Get the student to not engage with the students causing the issue. Do not respond to the abuser as you may escalate the issue
- Get them to turn their phone off, or defriend, or remove the app
- Go to the Netsafe website to gain further knowledge as to what you can do
- Report issues to the Police instead of the school



After consultation the Board has decided that from February 2023 student mobile phone use at school between the hours of 9:00am to 3:30pm will be banned.

Students do not need to have their phones at school because any internet use will be provided through school devices and any emergency the student has will be dealt with through the school. Mobile phones/ear pods/earbuds will not be allowed.

We have done this to improve a number of things:

- To increase the face-to-face interactions with our students
- Reduce and prevent the taking of unsolicited photos/videos, etc at school
- More time will be spent on educating the students instead of dealing with the issues of mobile phones misuse
- Improve relationships between students and students as well as students and staff
- Allows for a decreased time in front of a screen. Although we will be using laptops and Chromebooks, at least at interval and lunchtime the students will not have their faces glued to a phone or screen.
- It will reduce the raru raru (issues) between staff and students.

This is going to be a major change for the staff and students
but many schools are heading down this road.

When you take away the drug from the drug addict there will be withdrawal period.

We will expect this and will be ready for it.

We have researched the impact of banning phones and found that similar schools to ours, like Waiuku College and Te Puke High, have banned them and they have found a huge positive impact on the climate of the school.

What will happen if the student has their mobile phone out at school during this time?

1. They will be warned and asked to put it away
2. It will be confiscated from the student and securely kept at the Student Centre for pick up at the end of the day.
3. Continual misuse - the student's phone will be confiscated and securely kept at the Student Centre and will need to be collected by the parent at the end of the day.
4. Continued misuse means that the phone is not the issue, it is the continued floating of the school rules, which may lead to punitive measures such as Stand-down and Suspension.

PHONE FREE 2023

