

## WGC STUDENT MOBILE PHONE RULES

### Background

From early 2023, WGC has required ākonga (students) to store their mobile phones in pockets in classrooms during class time, unless kaiako (teachers) give permission to ākonga to use them during class as part of their learning. Based on international research, WGC introduced this because it wanted to maximise student learning by minimising the potential for distraction from mobile phones.

In early 2024, the Education (School Boards) Regulations 2020 were amended. Those regulations now require Boards to take steps to ensure ākonga don't use or access their mobile phones while at school, unless they have an exemption. These steps are required to be in place by Term 2.

### WGC Approach

WGC's approach is to continue to use pockets for mobile phones in classrooms **and** to also require that ākonga have their mobile phones in their bags during their break times (morning tea and lunch) and either on silent or switched off.

If ākonga use or access their mobile phones during class without permission, as per the current process, the student's phone will be taken off them and given to the Principal until the end of the day, where they can be collected by the ākonga's matua or kaitiaki (parent or caregiver). This system has worked well since the start of Term 3 2023 and very few students have had their phones confiscated.

If ākonga use or access their mobile phones during breaks (morning tea and lunch) and they don't have an exemption, ākonga will first be reminded to put their phones away. If ākonga continue to use or access their mobile phones during breaks, WGC staff may take their phones off them.

### Exemptions:

There are some exemptions to the use and access of mobile phones described in this rule:

1. *Learning activities* - A teacher may decide that ākonga can use or access mobile phones for their learning (already detailed above).
2. *Disability or Learning Support* - Ākonga with additional learning needs or disabilities who use or access mobile phones to increase or improve their ability to participate and learn will be granted an exemption by the WGC Board or their delegate.
3. *Health and Wellbeing* - Ākonga with health and/or wellbeing concerns or needs that require the use of or access to a mobile phone will be granted an exemption by the WGC Board or their delegate.
4. *Other special circumstances* - If special circumstances exist that means it's necessary for ākonga to use or access a mobile phone, they will be granted an exemption by the Principal (e.g. protection issues etc).

Exemptions will either:

- Be granted by WGC as ākonga circumstances matching the above exemptions come to light; or
- Ākonga, matua or kaitiaki can request an exemption via email or in person. Requests for an exemption based on:
  - Grounds 2 and 3 should be made to the School Counsellor or Director of International students in the first instance.
  - Ground 4 should be made to the Principal.

### **Contacting ākonga**

We understand that some mātua and kaitiaki like their children to have a phone to communicate with them. Ākonga can use and access mobile phones before and after school. If mātua or kaitiaki needs to contact their child urgently during the day, they should call the office or contact their child via their school email address.

### **Education outside the classroom (EOTC)**

Students may take certain digital devices on EOTC activities but should check whether their device is allowed before the activity commences. Usage will be at the discretion of teachers and other adult supervisors.

Please note that in addition to this rule, any other WGC guidelines that detail expected, and appropriate mobile phone use still apply.