

Off at the Gate Cell Phone Policy

Introduction:

St Thomas's School is responsible for providing a safe and inclusive working and learning environment for all members of our school community. We have an '**Off at the Gate**' policy for all student's phones and related accessories (e.g. smart watches, ear buds, earphones and bluetooth speakers on the school grounds.

We understand that some parents like their children to have a phone to communicate with their child after school, however, if a parent or caregiver needs to contact their child urgently during the day, **they should call the school office.**

The Purpose:

- Allow students to connect with each other before school starts.
- Prevent unwanted or unauthorised photos, videos or digital recordings from being taken at school.
- Prevent access to social media or unauthorised internet connections before or during school.
- Prevent inappropriate material or media from being accessed, viewed or shared before or during school.
- Prevent disruptions to the classroom teaching and learning programme.

How it will work:

- All Phones and related accessories including smart watches **MUST** be switched off before coming onto school grounds. This means upon entry to any school gate.
- Ear buds / headphones are to be removed before entering school and may be used for learning purposes upon instruction of a teacher.
- During school, students are not allowed to use their phone and associated devices - it is a time for face-to-face social interaction, preparing for class etc.

If a student is found using a device in breach of the rule:

1. The student will take the device to the office, where it will be stored.
2. The student's parents will be contacted and will be responsible for picking up the device. Devices will not be returned to students.

Be aware that students who seriously or repeatedly breach the policy may be banned from bringing **any** device to school.

It is important to note that if students do make the decision to bring a phone to the school grounds, they do so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for any loss or damage caused to any phone.

Ratified by Board	
Signed	<u>n.c.</u>
Date	<u>6/6/2024.</u>