

11 November, 2019



Dear Parent/Caregiver

Over the past few months, the Senior Leadership Team have been reviewing the current BYOD policy and associated digital technology policies. We have had a good look at what we say we are supposed to be doing, what we are actually doing, what the students think, and what we think our practice should look like going forward.

At Cornerstone, we remain committed to embracing the use of digital technology in the classroom context. After all, digital technology plays an important part in the lives of our young people. The more we can ensure our young people are work-ready when they leave school, the more likely they will be to succeed in their first few years after school.

That said, there are many aspects of digital technology we do not need at school. For instance, our recommended device is simply a WIFI enabled laptop. We do not need the device to have a data plan. It does not need to be able to play games or access social media. We provide a school-based email service for all students and staff. This is more than adequate for all inter-student communication and staff-student communication.

Likewise, we provide our senior [Y11-13] students with an option line of Learning Café. In Learning Café, students can work on their homework, upcoming assignments, and other school related tasks in a supervised environment. This is an ideal time for students to access the internet for research and learning.

The review did highlight a number of areas we would like to address. Firstly, we are not comfortable providing unsupervised student access to the internet – something that has previously been happening during breaktimes, after hours, weekends and holidays on school grounds. So, we will ensure the school's provision of the internet matches our capacity to supervise that provision. As we cannot supervise all spaces in the school at intervals, breaktimes and out of hours, access to the student WIFI network will soon be disabled during these times.

Secondly, cell phones are not recommended devices for school. They are not needed at school and are not asked for by school. Any student cell phones currently given access to the student network by the school will soon be cycled off the network. The school will continue to monitor its own network through its internet provider [N4L], its own laptops, and student WIFI enabled laptops which access the student network under the terms of the BYOD policy. However, we cannot monitor devices that are on independent data plans. Parents may continue to provide their son or daughter with a cell phone at their discretion, but it will not be monitored by the school as it is not required by the school. Parents are responsible for monitoring the use of devices they provide to their children. Any student cell phones that are at school, are not to be visible in the learning environment**.

Thirdly, device use at breaktimes. By shutting off the student WIFI at breaktimes, student devices that meet the requirements of the BYOD policy will not have access to the internet. Therefore, any activity on those devices will be restricted to the material that parents allow their children to have on those devices in the first place.

Finally, the Education Act 1989 provides teachers and authorised staff with certain powers when they have reasonable grounds to believe that a student has digital information [known as an item] stored on their device at school or other digital technology that is endangering the emotional or physical safety of other students, or is detrimentally affecting the learning environment.

Teachers and authorised staff can ask a student to:

1. Reveal the item
2. Delete the item
3. Surrender the digital device on which the item is stored
4. Retain the surrendered digital device for a reasonable period

Any behaviour deemed objectionable by the school while using a device of any sort at school will be considered a disciplinary issue and will be dealt with according to the school's behaviour management procedures and the computer acceptable use policy. This includes:

- a. Personal texting/calling/messaging, during instructional time.
- b. Storing and/or distributing (including uploading or sharing) harmful digital items during school hours or on school trips.
- c. Using a device in a manner that is detrimental to the learning environment.
- d. Using a device in a manner that is harmful to oneself or another person, e.g. social media bullying, displaying objectionable material.
- e. Possessing a visible cell phone during instructional times (**unless permitted by a staff member for a particular purpose).

When determining what is a harmful digital item, the following factors will be taken into account by the school: the age of students involved, course contexts, supervision levels, and/or any other relevant information available at the time. This includes gaming or other leisure related activities that parents permit their children to have on their devices.

What to do if you have concerns.

1. If you have reasonable grounds to believe that a student has harmful digital items stored on their device whilst at school, or other digital technology that is endangering the emotional or physical safety of other students or detrimentally affecting the learning environment, please contact Paul Jorgensen at paul@cornerstone.ac.nz in the first instance to report your information.
2. If you believe your son or daughter is a victim of social media bullying, seek advice from <https://www.netsafe.org.nz>. If you believe that such activity is occurring at school, contact Carl McIntyre or Erika Snedden at carl@cornerstone.ac.nz, erika@conerstone.ac.nz.

We trust these new measures will continue to help build a caring and relevant learning environment for our young people. However, digital technology and its use by young people is constantly evolving. We anticipate reviewing the associated policies frequently.

Kind regards

James Rose
Deputy Principal

