

SMARTPHONE DELAY

Not never. Just not *yet*.



FAIRHOLME
COLLEGE

Their First Phone Can Wait

At Fairholme College, we are committed to supporting the wellbeing and development of each student. As young people navigate an increasingly connected world, it is important to consider not only if a smartphone is needed, but when.

For this reason, we encourage families to consider delaying smartphones until at least the end of Year 7 and, where possible, into Year 8.

A smartphone brings much more than calls and messages. It opens the door to social media, online content, group chats, messaging platforms, notifications and a digital world that can be challenging for young people to manage.

We also recognise one of the hardest things for a young person is feeling like they are the only one without a smartphone.

That's why Fairholme, together with Toowoomba Grammar School and The Glennie School are encouraging families to delay smartphones for Year 7 student, and, where possible, into Year 8. The more families who delay, the easier it becomes for every family to do so.

You don't have to be the only parent saying "not yet".

By delaying smartphone access, we can work together to give our girls more time to develop the confidence, judgement and resilience they will need to navigate the online world successfully.

Timing Matters

The middle years of schooling are an important period of growth and development. Delaying smartphone access can help protect and preserve time for:

- ♥ Healthy sleep habits
- ♥ Face-to-face friendships
- ♥ School engagement and learning
- ♥ Physical activity and sport
- ♥ Family relationships
- ♥ Hobbies, interests and creativity
- ♥ Overall wellbeing



Choose the Right First Phone

For many students, a basic phone provides everything they need.

A talk and text phone allows students to:

- ✓ Stay connected with family
- ✓ Call when they need assistance
- ✓ Develop independence
- ✓ Build responsibility gradually

While avoiding:

- ✗ Social media
- ✗ Internet access
- ✗ Constant notifications
- ✗ Online risks and distractions

A basic phone offers connection without introducing the full range of access that comes with a smartphone.



Building Healthy Digital Habits Together

Whether a student has a basic phone now or a smartphone later, healthy digital habits begin with open conversations.

We encourage families to discuss:

WHEN

When should devices be put away? Such as during meals, homework time and overnight.

WHERE

Where can devices be used? Many families choose to keep devices out of bedrooms.

WHAT

Which apps, games and online platforms are appropriate?

PRIVACY

What information, images and locations should remain private?

MONEY

Who can approve purchases, subscriptions and downloads?

SUPPORT

What should she do if something online makes her feel uncomfortable, unsafe or concerned?

Make an agreement together. Clear and shared expectations help build trust and responsibility.



Staying Connected

Students do not need a smartphone to maintain meaningful connections with family and friends.

Many families successfully stay connected through:

- Calls and text messages
- Teams or Zoom video calls via College issue laptop
- Email

For Boarding Families

We recognise the importance of maintaining strong family connections. Platforms such as Teams and Zoom provide a simple and effective way for boarders and families to stay connected.

Why Not Lock Down a Smartphone

Parental controls can be a valuable tool, but they do not change the nature of a smartphone. Settings can be altered, new apps continually emerge, and smartphones often create expectations around messaging, social media, photos and constant availability.

If a student's needs are limited to calls and messages, a basic phone is the simplest and most effective option.

In our experience, many families find that beginning with less access is easier to manage than trying to restrict access after a smartphone has already become part of everyday life.

When the Time Comes

There will come a time when your daughter is ready for a smartphone. When that time arrives, introducing it gradually can help establish healthy habits from the beginning.

We encourage families to:

- Continue conversations about online safety
- Discuss privacy and digital footprints
- Set clear expectations around social media use
- Protect sleep by keeping devices out of bedrooms overnight
- Maintain balance between online and offline activities
- Create an environment where activities online can be openly discussed and supported





T 07 4688 4688
www.fairholme.qld.edu.au

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