



Department of
Education, Training and Employment

26 FEB 2014

Mrs Bernadette Savage and Mr Bryan Brown
Email: b.savage@qut.edu.au

Dear Ms Savage and Mr Brown

Thank you for your email dated 16 February 2014 regarding the two day suspension of your son Marcus and your concerns about the process. I have investigated your concerns.

All schools have a Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students, which is developed in consultation with the school community and outlines the expected behaviour and the consequences for non-compliance with the expected behaviours.

The Mansfield State High School's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students contained within the school prospectus, clearly states that 'Students are not to have mobile phones in their possession at school during school hours. When it is necessary for a student to bring a mobile phone, it must be deposited at the Resource Centre on arrival (from 8am) and collected from the Resource Centre on departure. This is the same situation for students during exam block. Students found with a mobile phone in their possession and who do not have the Principal's express permission, are suspended'. The section in the responsibilities of students section states that it is the responsibility of students to abide by school rules.

When students enrol at Mansfield State High School, the student and the parent sign an enrolment agreement accepting the rules and regulations of Mansfield State High School as stated in the school policies. The student and the parent acknowledge that information about the school's current programs and services has been explained to them.

Mansfield State High School is in possession of Marcus' enrolment agreement, which you and he signed on 14 March 2012. Additionally, each year students are reminded to read the rules in the Student Handbook and to sign to indicate that they have read them. As part of this process, Marcus recently signed the sheet, along with other students, that acknowledged that he had read the appropriate pages in the school's 2014 handbook relating to the school's rules, policies and procedures, including the rule on mobile phones.

Mansfield State High School was operating within their Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students, which clearly sets out suspension as a consequence for not following the school rules around mobile phone use. There are no appeal rights to the Director-General for a suspension of 10 days or less. As with all administrative decisions, parents and students may seek a judicial review.

The School Council reviewed the mobile phone policy as recently as last year and believed that the system of signing in/out of phones and the consequences for not doing so were appropriate.

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With respect to your views on the use of mobile phones, I would encourage you to contact the School Council to raise the issue of the zero tolerance policy and the appropriateness of the consequences the school has set for students who do not follow the school rules.

You were concerned that Marcus' school bag was taken to the office without Marcus' knowledge. The school has indicated that the bag was picked up and taken to the office by a teacher who heard a phone ringing inside the bag. The bag was in the playground with other bags and no students were nearby.

In relation to your comment that Marcus had little time to completely eat his lunch, the Deputy Principal, Ms Hamilton has indicated she asked Marcus if he had eaten his lunch and when he said he had not, he was invited to eat it at the office.

I invite you to contact Mr Wayne Butler, Assistant Director-General, State School Operations and Strategy, on telephone 3237 0157, if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



DR JIM WATTERSTON
Director-General

Ref: 14/58161