



Mobile Phones

Webinar for families of Winmalee High School

Acknowledgement of Country

Warami. Winmalee High School is located within the Ngurra (Country) of the Dharug and the Gundungurra peoples, the traditional custodians of this land. Our school is a place of belonging and inclusion and we recognise the continuous and deep connection that the traditional owners have to this

Country. Our school community commit to honouring the spiritual connection that First Nations people have with this special land, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging. We thank past elders for protecting and caring for this traditional land. Collectively, we commit to learning together, so we can gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture, through education and truth telling. We extend respect to all Aboriginal students, their families, community members and leaders. This commitment statement is a celebration of culture and embodies our dedication to learning together.



Why?

Concerned by the increase in the use of phones during learning time

Concerned by the distraction to learning phones cause in the classroom and the management required by teachers

Concerned by the impact on student health, wellbeing; and their relationships with peers

Data snapshot

- Young people tap, swipe or click on average 2,617 times per day
- The top 10% of users double that to 5,427 touches per day
- Apple and google research shows that children unlock their phones on average 110 times per day
- On average a student's phone will ping 150 times during their school day
- Teenagers who spend 5 or more hours a day on electronic devices are 71% more likely to have health problems, both physical and mental
- 52% of these people will sleep for less than 7 hours a night.

What are we seeing?

- Students regularly checking their phones during lessons.
- Students taking phone calls or responding to messages from friends or from their parents during lessons.
- Students being focused on social issues outside of the classroom when they should be completing work.
- An increase in managing conflict which starts online.
- An increase in behaviour management issues related to mobile phones.
- General apathy and distraction from learning in the classroom.

s o u r c e s o f i n f o r m a t i o n

anecdotal and
observational
data from
school staff

parent/ carer
and student
survey data

current
research

Articles used to
inform our research
are all available on
our [website](#).

Research findings related to learning and wellbeing:

- A decrease in students' ability to focus on educational tasks.
- 78% of educators noticed a decrease in empathy.
- Reduced abilities to apply deeper meta-cognitive skills.
- A decline in overall readiness to learn.
- Impacting on sleep, which in turn impacts on learning the following day at school.
- Poor reactions from students when phone is removed.
- Teachers having to constantly watch students and what they are accessing on their devices.

Research findings related to learning and wellbeing:

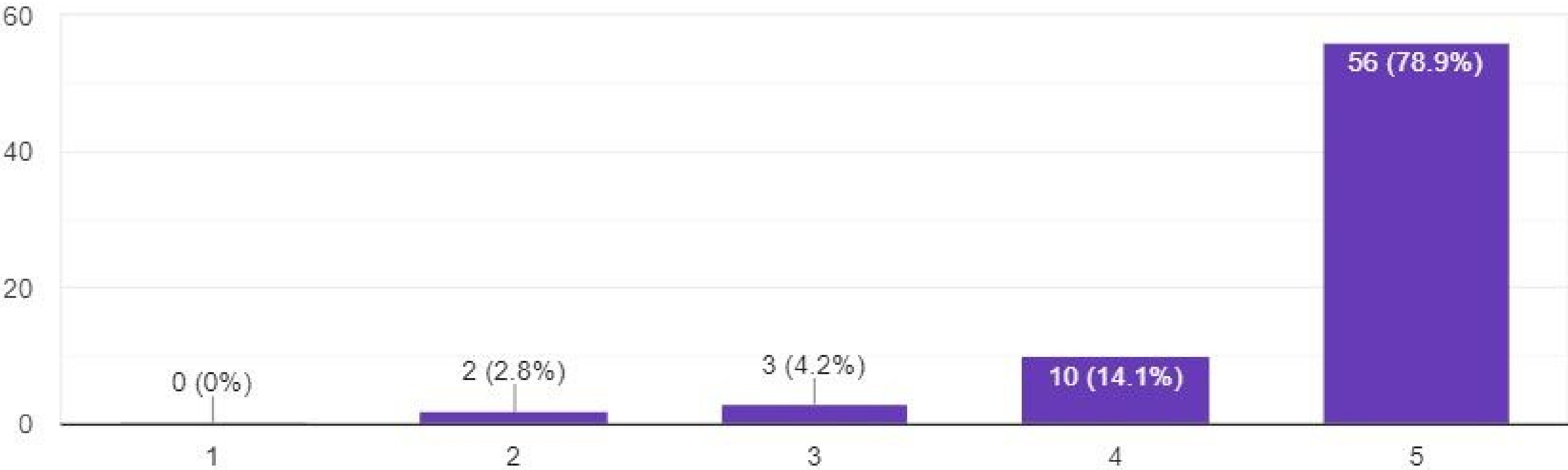
- Increase in the prevalence of social issues, including bullying and harassment.
- Impacting on social /emotional competencies and ability to maintain relationships.
- Issues of bullying coming into school from overnight or weekend; caused emotional stress and continues.
- A decreasing of student independence as students contact others, including family when an issue arises.

What you told us

I am concerned about the impact that mobile phones can have on the mental health and wellbeing of students.



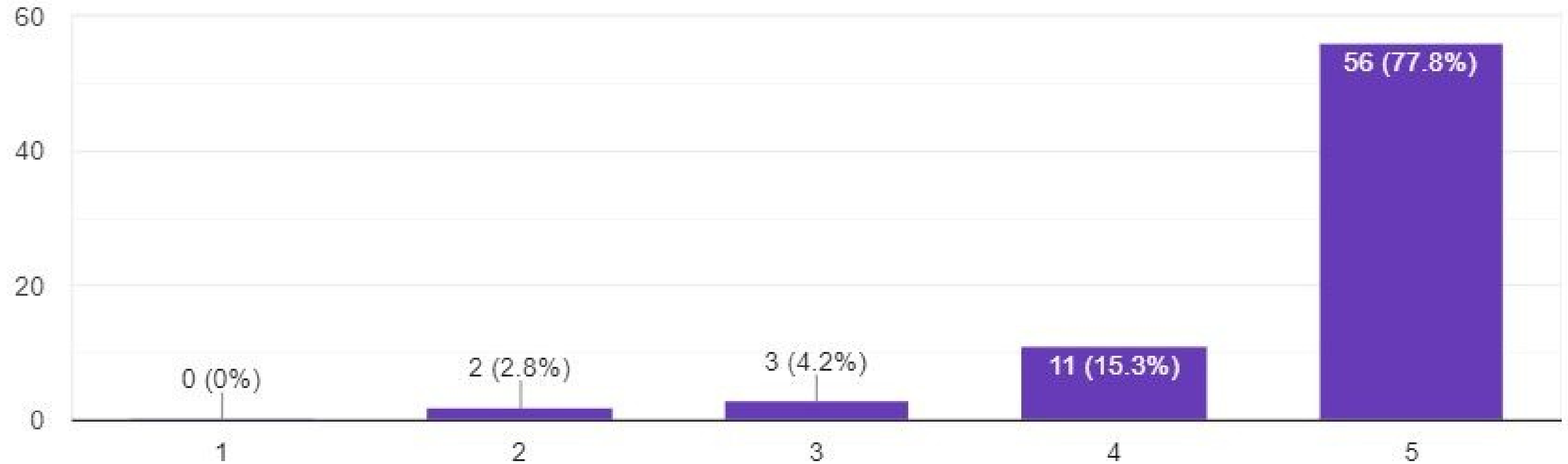
71 responses



I am concerned by the distraction to learning caused by the use of mobile phones at school.



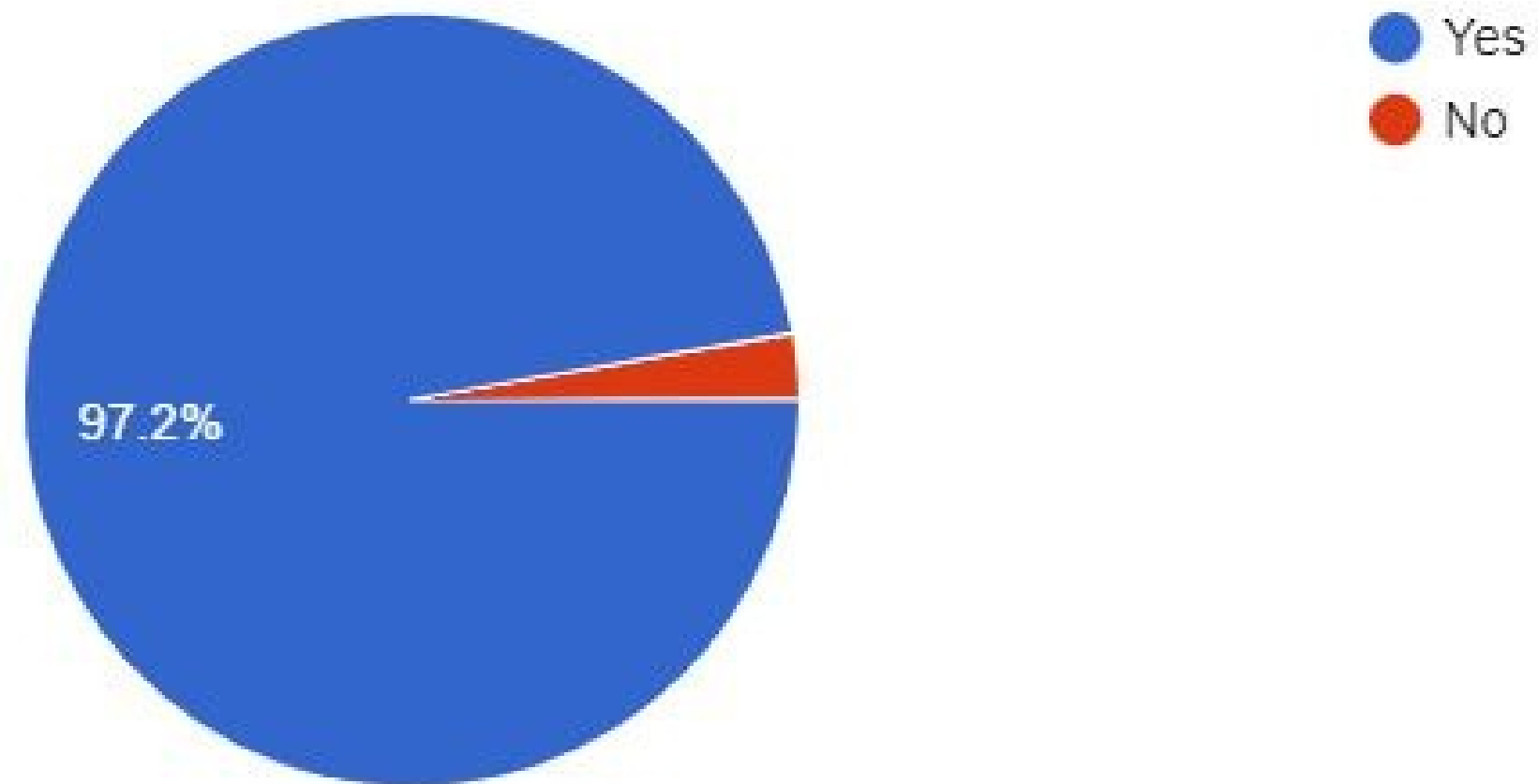
72 responses



Would you support a no mobile phone policy during class time?

 Copy

72 responses



- Make classrooms mobile free and give teachers an increased measure to teach students. It's really that simple, **remove the distraction and annoyances from classrooms.**
- A great initiative. **Clear boundaries are very important.** Personally, I am in favour of a no phones.
- I think phones should be handed in to the teacher as kids enter class the given back at the end **unless they're used for schoolwork.** The exception is year 12, who I think should have their phones unless they are abusing them.
- I think **consistency amongst the teachers is key also.** Some teachers let the kids listen to music during class (I'm not a fan of this personally) while other teachers are much stricter. I'm a fan of phones to remain in their bags until recess and then again at lunch.
- While mobile phones mightn't be massively problematic at WHS I think it's **in kids' best interests to be able to focus** on one thing!
- Just a request that you quietly **have a word with the kids who use phones for medical reasons** so they're confident to use their phones in class.
- **I strongly support.** Wish you well as you try to endorse.
- Even when my child is not inappropriately using his phone in class, he is aware when others are using their phones, which is distracting for him. Get rid of them in class, I say. **Teachers should be free to teach not have to monitor that behaviour.**
- Students having **phones in class have prevented other students from participating in class to the best of their ability;** unwilling to share ideas/opinions in class and doing minimal in class presentations, for fear of being filmed.
- I would support a ban of phones at school **except for emergency purposes.** Be good to ask the students what they think.

- Everyone has a different perspective based on their own experience mobile phones can be both positive and negative when weighing up the two **the balance tips towards negative as it allows for unnecessary and unpredictable outcomes whilst trying to navigate limited time in class to meet the needs of all students**. Class time should be an **escape from the added pressure** that mobile phones have unfortunately added to the social pressures that students already face.
- This really is a must. Use of mobile phones in class is **distracting from learning and ultimately brain development** and is not fair on teachers or other students. I hope you have the support to implement this immediately. Thank you.
- It would be interesting to see actual data on the extent of use of devices during class time, the type of devices being used, and the reason for use during class time. As mentioned before **there would be reasonable uses for study, research and emergency purposes**. I acknowledge these devices would also provide for distraction, but ensuring they stay contained within a student's bag, are kept on silent, are only brought out for class purposes when given permission to do so & are available for emergency use is in principle reasonable. A blanket no use during class policy time without fair exemptions would not be reasonable.
- We'd **really support clear boundaries** around the kids re: mobile phone usage in class.
- **Why do students need to access mobile phones during school time?** WHS should follow the lead of other public NSW schools (like Lismore High), which requires students lock their phones in a locker at the start of the day, and only get them at the end of the day.
- Mobile phones can be fantastic sources of information and great tools for learning, in a planned session. However, most of the time I hear that some students spend a lot of class time on social media and instant messaging. **My only hesitation with a no mobile phone policy is that my children have both used their phones with earbuds to play instrumental music while completing classwork** when they have been in particularly disruptive classes. It helps them to concentrate and get the work done so they don't have to do it at lunch or at home. It is a difficult decision to make, but I would still choose no mobiles.

Thank you for pursuing this, **it must be a united front between schools and families**. Phones are a part of our lives, but for the developing brain and body the impacts are significant and many are irreversible. Please ban them for the entire school day ASAP. Children require our guidance, and we are failing them.

Parents play an important part in teaching their child's self discipline regarding the use of mobile phones whilst at school. **It is a community issue and both School and Parents** have to work together.

I would fully support the school if it adopted the policy that some other schools have recently where mobile phones are away even during lunch and recess as well as during class. I think this would support students' social skills to engage with each other properly by talking and help prepare them for work places where they need to communicate effectively with face to face contact and nurture relationships with each other and also encourage activity which kids are lacking these days thanks to their preference to be head down looking at their phones all the time.

I am currently reading "**Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention.**" By Johann Hari. It has been an excellent read on this very subject and well worth taking excerpts from.

Students

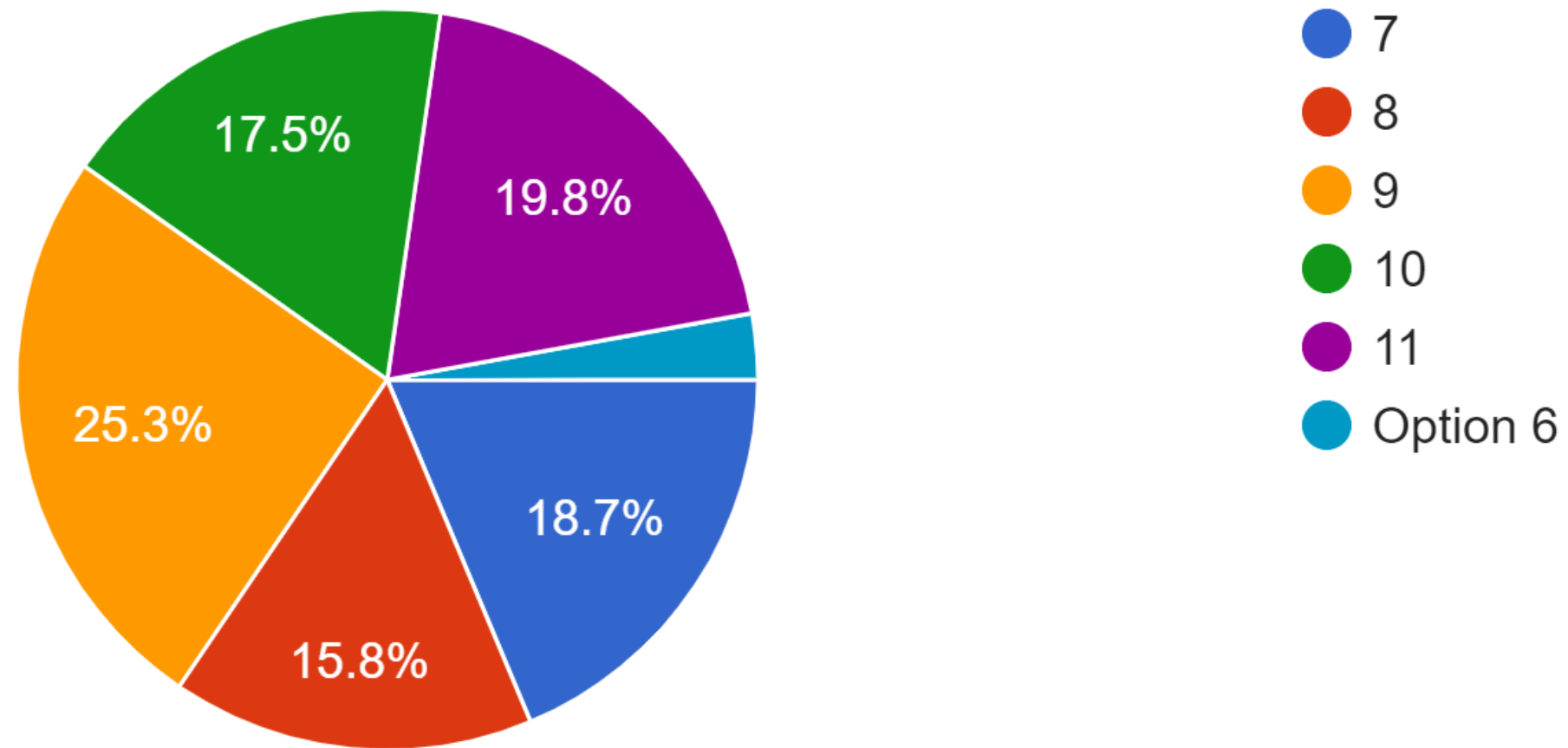
Student survey data

- The complete opposite to parent survey
- Mixed responses for support
- Some students wanting change and support this
- Some students sounded anxious, needing the security of being in contact with family
- Some students were angry.



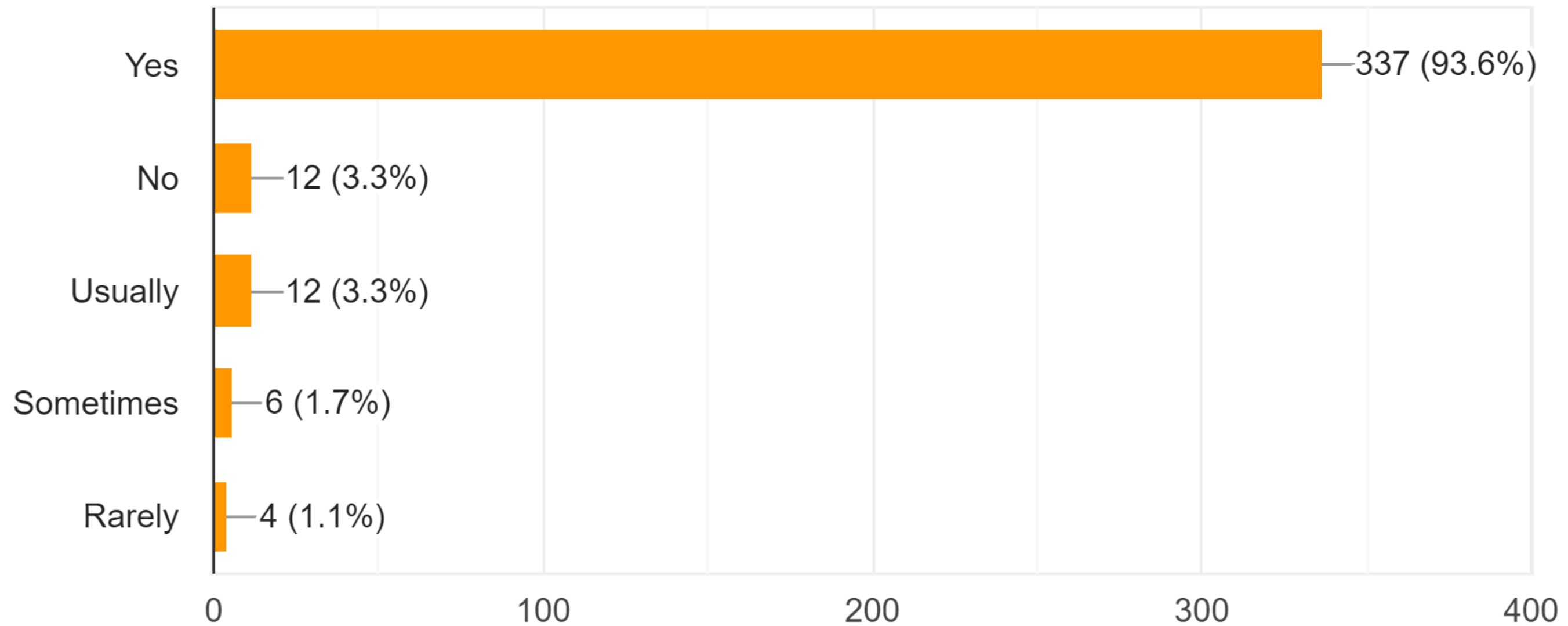
I am in Year:

348 responses



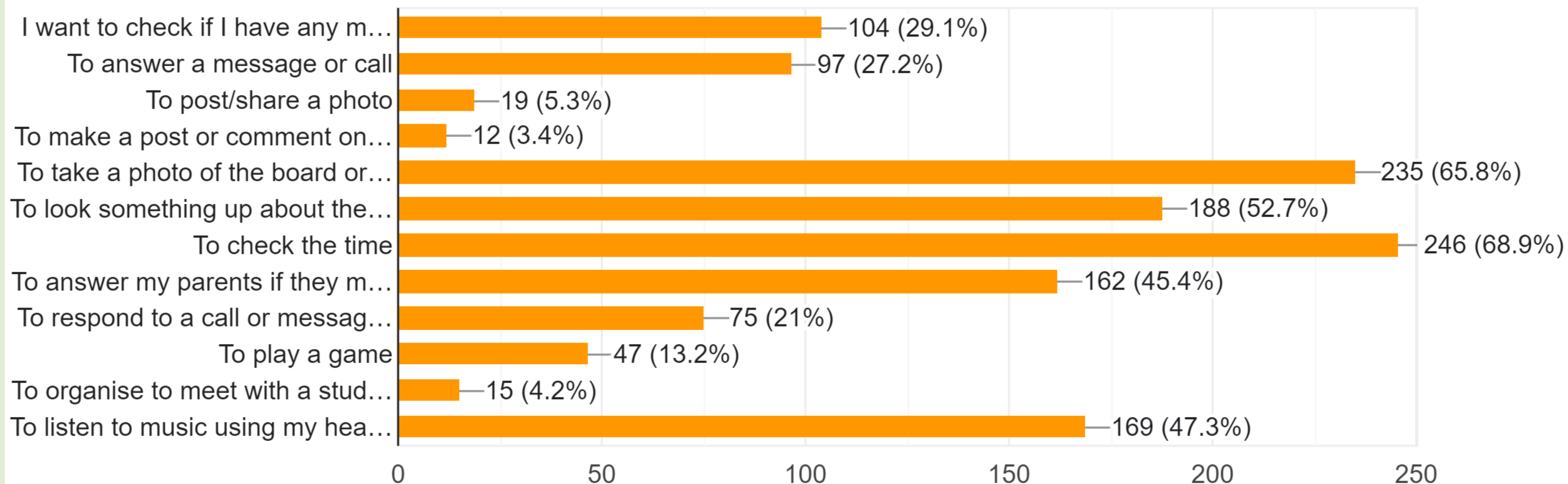
I bring a mobile phone to school

360 responses



When you use your phone in class what are the main reasons? (select all that apply to you)

357 responses



Student responses

- I think that a no phone in class policy **would be good, as long as students can use there phones for Kahoot and researching if teachers give them permission.**
- Just **be more strict about the phones but don't ban.**
- I don't agree that it **would be hard to get used to, but I do agree that it would help people** focus on learning.
- **I don't want to use my phone as much as I do** I think a no phones system would help.
- I think we should **be allowed to keep our phones but if repeated use continues even after being told to put it away then we should have it taken** for that period.

Student responses

- I understand why they want to take our phones away but **I really hope we can still listen to music when doing independent work and have permission.** That's the thing I would miss a lot, and heaps of people listen to music to do work without it distracting them. Personally I find I can focus more.
- **You can't have a blanket solution.** A yes or no to whether phones should be banned in class isn't really reliable. Maybe it should be more specific to a class or to students, because unfortunately either way people will use their phones. In some classes yes it is a big problem, but in others the use of mobile phones is minimal and appropriate. Taking a perspective of **getting kids to understand how to have a good relationship to their phone instead of forcing them to never look at it in class even to check the time is more sustainable.**

- I think just having a phone box, and **strict rules about phones being taken when seen would benefit everyone's learning a whole lot!** It's all capitalism's fault for rewarding companies to make their devices more addictive! I think mobile phones have a massive impact on teenagers' development.
- **Mobile phones can help in the classroom but can also distract.** For example ways that help in the classroom include looking online for quizzes, general conversation and answers in class, taking photos of classwork and checking Google classroom. They also majorly distract kids in the classroom. Disrespecting teachers, distracting other peers, distracting themselves, preventing people from doing classwork and being able to talk to the teacher about assessments.
- I think it's important for students to have their phone with them as **it is a comfort for anxiety and means they feel they have access to support without having to ask a teacher or get anyone else involved.** I already use my phone at school to receive important messages from my parents. I think that having no phones at school would not be a smart idea. Thank you.

Student comments contd.

- There were many comments about students wanting more visible clocks in classrooms, so they would need to check the time less (some can't read analogue clocks).
- Listening to music came up a lot, with students saying it helps to focus and relax them.
- Concern for disadvantaging students who do the right thing.
- Several comments about having a strong need to be in contact with parents throughout the day – worry, personal troubles, anxiety, emergencies, picking up siblings.
- *Disappointingly, some comments (only a few) which were rude and disrespectful. Fear of taking something away.*



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Student Use of Digital Devices and Online Services Policy and Procedures

Purpose

This policy guides student use of digital devices and online services at our school.

Winmalee High School acknowledges that mobile phones and electronic devices are an important communication tool in the day to day lives of students, particularly in supporting a sense of personal safety and for communicating with important people in their lives. We understand the educational value of digital devices and online services in supporting and enhancing educational outcomes and student wellbeing. However, mobile phones and digital devices can be disruptive in classrooms. The unregulated presence of mobile phones and devices in the classroom can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion. We also recognise they may cause harm if used inappropriately and that we need to support our students to use them in safe, responsible and respectful ways.

This policy covers student use of digital devices and online services in school-related settings, including on school grounds, at school-related activities and outside of school where there is a clear and close connection between the school and the conduct of students. This policy covers the use of school-provided and personal digital devices and all online services.

current policy

Is in place, but needs stronger
systems and procedures to support
a more focused classroom
environment.

This is not a ban.

It is a tightening of procedures to enact a policy which is sound.

It is a way we can work together to support learning and improve focus.

It is an opportunity for students to have a break from the pressures of phones.



what will be the process in classrooms with phones?



1. In the bag or in the box

2. Only out if required for learning (with permission)

3. If phone is out without permission, in the box

4. Returned end of lesson

5. Non compliance - confiscation

Additional Information

- Does not include restrictions during school breaks.
- Students receive their devices back at the end of each lesson.
- Students have the option of keeping their phone in their bag, if they are able to manage it responsibly.
- If confiscation occurs for non-compliance, it is for the day.
- No students will be permitted to access the mobile box at any time.
- Students will be reminded of the procedure and go through the process at the start of each lesson.

Additional Information

- Where there is a suitable/appropriate use for phones in class, the teacher can encourage students to utilise their device (surveys, quizzes, and other relevant learning tasks).
- Students with specific plans or needs may seek exemption, as per the policy.
- This will commence from the start of 2023.
- We will work with parents/carers where individual students don't cooperate with this reasonable system.
- This initiative will also be supported by some workshops and sessions for students on cyber safety.

Thank you