

MEDIA RELEASE

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



SMS in class? Get over it, says Tassie teacher

As the 2009 school year begins Australia-wide, a University of Tasmania honours student maintains rules on students using mobile phones at school are a failure - so teachers should 'get over it' and incorporate mobile phones into everyday routines.

After surveying students and teachers from five Hobart high schools, Martin Beattie concluded that rules were almost useless in controlling the mobile phone text message onslaught.

"Virtually all the high school students I surveyed own mobile phones and see it is their right to use them at school," he said.

"Over 90 per cent of the students I spoke to used their phones at school and even in schools with strict no-phone policies 85 per cent of students in Years 9 and 10 admitted sending an SMS text message without teacher permission.

"School rules only made a small difference to phone use."

Mr Beattie's thesis, *2 text yr m8 is gr8!*, also found that students had good communication-based reasons for sending text messages rather than frivolous ones such as phone-based competitions or personal blogs.

"They rarely contact their friends in the same classroom," he said.

"They contact friends out of class or school (62.3 per cent) and parents (30 per cent). They also use them to help their studies or deal with emergencies such as getting details of medical appointments or home / school transport.

"An interesting point is that 67 per cent of parents contact their children during school hours, mostly to remind them of medical appointments or other commitments."

Mr Beattie recommends schools get over their objections to mobile phones at school and start incorporating mobile phone use into school routines.

"After all, there's nothing quite like the private text message that quietly reads: The principal would like to see you in her office - NOW!" he said.

For further information contact Martin Beattie.

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