

# Murrumbeena Primary School Policy

## Mobile Phones (and Devices used for Communication) Student Use Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Principal or Assistant Principal on 9568 1300.

### PURPOSE

This policy outlines the requirements of the Minister for Education relating to students using mobile phones and devices such as smartwatches, ipads and tablets during school hours.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff at Murrumbeena Primary School, including education support staff, casual relief teachers and visiting teachers.

### DEFINITION

For the purpose of this policy, a mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. This includes smartwatches and tablets used for calls and messages.

### SUMMARY

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones (and devices) to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.
- For the purpose of this policy, a mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. A mobile device such as a smartwatch and ipad is also considered in the same way a mobile phone is.
- Exceptions to the policy may be applied if certain conditions are met. Exceptions can be granted by the principal, or by a teacher. Exceptions must be documented.
- Where students bring a mobile phone (or device) to school, the school must provide secure storage.
- Schools will manage non-compliance with their local mobile phone and devices policy in accordance with their existing student engagement policy.
- Schools should review their local policy as part of their regular cycle of review for school policy

### DETAILS

Students who choose to bring mobile phones (and devices) to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.

Schools are required to develop a local policy on students using mobile phones (and devices), which must include how this ministerial policy will be implemented. Refer to implementation practices within this policy.

## EXCEPTION

Exceptions to the policy:

- may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met (eg. medical)
- can be granted by the principal, in accordance with this policy and the school's policies related to mobile devices and ICT.
- must be documented, noting that, to avoid administrative burden on schools, this requirement can be met by including exceptions in documents that schools already regularly develop/use (see below for suggested ways to document).

Where an exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone for the purpose for which it was granted.

The 3 categories of exceptions and associated suggested documentation for each are:

- learning-related, comprising:
  - specific learning activities (class-based exception) documented within a unit of work or learning sequence  
(Example: A teacher may design a unit of work that requires a student to use a mobile phone's camera to record the staged development of a product over several weeks, supporting the production of a folio)
  - reasonable adjustments to a learning program because of a disability and/or learning difficulty, documented in an Individual Learning Plan or Individual Education Plan  
(Example: Some students on the autism spectrum may have difficulty with communication and may use a mobile device to aid/support communication. For example, a student may use an application on a mobile phone to participate in classroom discussions by selecting words or phrases to be spoken through their device)
- health and wellbeing-related, including:
  - students with a health condition documented in the Student Health Support Plan  
(Example: A student with diabetes may use their mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar and the administration of insulin)
  - students who are young carers documented in a localised student record  
(Example: In the case of a young person providing care to a parent with health issues, their mobile phone may be used to discuss health issues with medical professionals and the person they are caring for. For example, the young carer may receive advice from a doctor on what medications to administer and when)
- risk related to managing students offsite, including where students:
  - travel to and from excursions documented in risk assessment planning  
(Example: An excursion that requires students and teachers to travel via bus poses the risk that a bus may be delayed due to break down or traffic. With an exception, students would be able to switch their phones on and use them to rearrange pick-up times with their parents/carers, after permission has been granted from the teacher or excursion/ camp organiser.)
  - are on an excursion or camp documented in risk assessment planning  
(Example: Students undertaking a 'City Experience' excursion (or similar) may be permitted to carry mobile phones to manage the risk of separation from the group (students can use the phone to contact a designated contact). Students with permission to use their phones (or mobile devices for this purpose) will be documented in the excursion risk management plan.
  - are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission documented in risk assessment planning  
(Example: Where a student is considered sufficiently mature to leave the school grounds independently, with valid grounds and the consent of parents/carers)

- have a dual enrolment and/or need to undertake intercampus travel documented in risk assessment planning  
(Example: Where a student is considered sufficiently mature to leave the school grounds independently, to travel to another campus, with the consent of their parents/carers).

## **INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS**

Wearable devices such as smartwatches, iPads and other personal devices are included in this policy, however, if they are brought to school, students must switch off all notifications during the school day. Parents are also not to message or call students during the school day.

The mobile phone and mobile devices policy does not apply for activities outside of school hours:

- out-of-school-hours care (OSHC)
- out-of-school-hours events
- travelling to and from school.

## **SECURE STORAGE**

Mobile phones (and devices) owned by students are brought to schools at the owner's risk. Please refer to the department's [Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the school must provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so.

The principal is responsible for determining the appropriate arrangements for secure storage. Examples of secure storage include:

- a lockable cupboard/ drawer stored in an administrative office.
- a lockable cupboard/ drawer in the classroom or, the classroom being locked when the teacher is not in the room.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Schools will enforce the policy under their existing student engagement and ICT policies.

At Murrumbena Primary School, students who use their mobile phone (or device: smartwatch, ipad, tablet) to phone or message, or to answer their phone or messages during the school day will have their phone (or device) confiscated.

Parents and Carers will be contacted when there has been a breach of this policy including if they refuse to relinquish their phones (or devices) to school staff when asked.

Where students have relinquished their mobile phones (or devices) to school staff, schools are expected to return them to the student or parent/carer at the end of the school day. This is to support student safety when travelling to and from school, during which times carrying a mobile phone (or device) may help to manage risks of harm.

Consistent with Ministerial Order 1125, suspensions are to be reserved for serious misuses of a mobile phone (or device) in schools that:

- meet the grounds for suspension, for example, cyberbullying
- are a last resort option that is considered after alternative interventions and support have been provided to the student to address the reasons for the behaviour associated with mobile phone (or device) use.

For further information refer to [Suspensions](#).

Reporting of some incidents involving mobile phones (or devices) to a relevant authority may be necessary under the department's [Reporting and Managing School Incidents Policy](#).

## REVIEW

The department recommends that schools review their local policy on students using mobile phones every 3 to 4 years or earlier where required, for example if:

- changes are made to this policy, which must be reflected in local policies
- the local policy is no longer effective or having the desired impact
- individuals or groups within the school community view elements of the local policy as contentious
- new issues have arisen that the school would like the local policy to address (for example, misuse of iPads and all other personal devices, wearable devices).

A policy review should focus on the effectiveness of the school's policy in meeting the objectives of this policy, which aims to help focus students' attention on learning in the classroom by providing them with:

- a safe environment to learn without distractions or inappropriate phone use (including cyberbullying)
- greater opportunity for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtimes.

Schools are encouraged to collect data as part of their review to help to measure their success in achieving these objectives. Examples of data that you may choose to collect include:

- survey results (teacher, student, parent/carer)
- focus groups (teacher, student, parent/carer)
- incident registers (for example, cyberbullying).

## RELATED POLICIES

- [Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses](#)
- [Reporting and Managing School Incidents](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	March 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 2027 or when the department updates its policies