Student use of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices Policy

Purpose:
This school policy is implemented in line with the Department for Education's Student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy, which applies to all government schools. This document provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal devices that students choose to bring to school.

For the purpose of this policy, **personal devices** include mobile phones, smartwatches and other devices that are capable of sending or receiving messages or calls and/or able to connect to the internet, and personal laptops or iPads that are not owned by the school and have not been brought to school by the student under a separate Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) agreement.

Rationale:
With the widespread and increasing ownership of mobile phones and other devices among students it is critical that schools, in partnership with families, provide clear guidelines for students to become informed, safe, respectful and responsible digital users.

It is the Department for Education's position that access to personal devices during school hours must be managed so that students can be fully present in their learning and in their interactions with teachers and peers.

The aim of the policy is to help promote:
- Safe environments with reduced negative impacts of inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and critical incidents that involve mobile phones.
- Classroom environments where teachers can teach, and students can learn, free from distractions caused by personal use of devices.
- Use of breaks as quality time away from screens, encouraging physical activity and play and meaningful face-to-face connections with peers.

Personal devices at school:
Students are permitted to bring personal devices to school:
- As a measure to ensure their safety while travelling to and from school.
- So that parents can contact them outside of school hours.
- To be used during school hours in line with an exemption that has been approved by the school under this policy.

While students are at school, or attending school activities, they must comply with any reasonable directions given by staff in line with this policy regarding their personal devices.

The Department for Education's policy requires students at all department schools to keep personal devices 'off and away' between the start and end of each school day, and while they are attending school activities off-site, such as camps and excursions.

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Students will not be able to access their personal devices at any time during school hours, unless they have received an approved exemption from the school to use the device for a specific, agreed reason. This means both physical access and remote access (e.g. connecting with the personal device via hotspot or using paired headphones).

Storage of personal devices at school

Students will turn their devices off or place them in flight mode before putting them in storage. This includes taking off and storing any wearable technology that fits the definition of this policy, such as smartwatches.

Students who bring mobile phones or other personal devices to school must ensure they are switched off or set to flight mode and stored in their school bag, or handed to their teacher at the beginning of the school day for secure storage. Devices handed in will be collected by students at the end of the school day. Students will not have access to these devices during the school day. Access to securely stored devices will be limited to teachers, leadership and administration staff only. Students bring these devices to school at their own risk, and the school accepts no responsibility for any loss, theft or damage.

Responses to non-compliance

Where students use a personal device at school without an approved exemption, or use it inappropriately, a response will be provided in line with the school's behaviour policy.

If a student is found to consistently not hand their device to the teacher, has misused a device, or has breached the student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy:

- The device will be confiscated and placed into secure storage in the classroom or front office and returned to the student or their parent/caregiver at the conclusion of the day.
- Parents/caregivers will be informed of the non-compliance with the policy.
- Consequences may be applied to the student such as administrative time out, internal suspension or suspension.

Where the student's misuse of personal devices is serious, it may be necessary for the school to consider responses in line with the department's suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students procedure, or to contact the South Australian Police if the behaviour is suspected illegal.

Exemptions

Exceptional circumstances

Individual students may have extenuating reasons for needing access to their personal device during school hours, such as where:

- The device is used to monitor or manage a health condition.
- The device is a negotiated adjustment to a learning program for a student with a disability or learning difficulties.
- The student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have more ready access to their personal device.
- The device is used for translation in the classroom by a student with English as an additional language.

Please contact the school if you need to request an exemption due to exceptional circumstances. These requests will be considered by the principal (or delegate) on a case-by-case basis. If approved, the exemption will be stored in the student's file or health care/learning plan as appropriate.

Temporary Exemptions

Teachers may approve a temporary exemption for a specific, agreed learning purpose. Where this occurs, school-owned devices or approved BYOD devices will be used in preference, devices must then be returned to 'off and away' and returned to storage. Temporary exemptions are subject to the device being used appropriately and only for the purpose specifically permitted by the teacher.

Under exceptional circumstances, and only if negotiated prior to the camp or excursion, students may be permitted to bring a personal device on camp or excursion to facilitate contact with their families at specified and supervised times. This will be determined by the teacher-in-charge, subject to planning approval from the principal and in line with the department's camps and excursions procedure. Conditions will be communicated clearly to students and families prior to the start of the camp or excursion.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- Make sure:
  - The policy is prepared using the department template, is endorsed and ratified by governing council and is reviewed on a regular basis.
  - The school's policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families.
  - There is provision of secure storage for student's personal devices that are handed in to school staff.
- Enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.
- Consider requests for exemptions from parents for exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions in this category are documented and that relevant staff, including temporary relief teachers, are informed about students with an exemption.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support staff to do the same.
- Support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.
- Make sure processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate or illegal use of personal devices in line with department policy and any legal requirements.

School Staff

- Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment.
- Respond to instances of non-compliance in line with the school's policy.

- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with the department's policy and procedures and any legal requirements.

- Ensure that students who are given permission to access their personal device use it appropriately and only for the specified purpose and store their personal devices away after the exempted activity has concluded.
- Make sure that students' personal devices handed in are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent) at the end of the same school day.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children. Use mobile phones for work-related/emergency purposes only when students are under their care.

Students

- Comply with the requirements of this policy and follow all reasonable directions from the principal and school staff.
- Turn devices off or place them in flight mode before handing them in for secure storage.
- If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with an exemption under this policy, do so in a safe, responsible, and respectful way and support peers to do the same.
- Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass, or threaten another person.
- Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film, or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.
- Notify a staff member if feeling unwell or are experiencing any other issues at school. Use the school's processes in all cases when requiring early collection from school.

Parents

- Support the implementation of this policy, including the consequences of non-compliance.
- Encourage their child not to bring a personal device to school unless necessary. Understand that the department does not provide insurance for accidental loss or damage to personal property that is brought onto school grounds. (However, claims may be met under the department's public liability insurance where the loss or damage can be attributed to a negligent act of omission on the part of the school – the school will contact the department for advice if this may be the case).
- Use the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school, including where a student is unwell or a message needs to be communicated to the student. Encourage their child to report to a staff member if they become unwell or experience an issue at school.
- Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone, or other personal devices, in a safe, responsible and respectful way.

Questions, concerns, and further information

This policy has been implemented by the school in line with the Department for Education's Student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy. You can find more information about the policy, and links to further resources for parents about personal devices and online safety, on the Department for Education website.

Please contact the school directly to discuss the possibility of an exemption if your child has exceptional circumstances as outlined in this policy.

Policy reviewed: October 2026
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