



MOBILE PHONES – STUDENT USE

Note that this is a ministerial policy formally issued by the Minister for Education under section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

PURPOSE

To outline the requirements of the Minister for Education relating to students using mobile phones during school hours.

To explain to our school community Altona North Primary School's policy requirements, and expectations regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile devices by students, at school or during school activities.

GUIDANCE

Mobile phones 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:

- student lockers that are lockable
- a lockable cupboard stored in an administrative office

Schools will enforce the policy under their existing student engagement policies, for example, through detention or a loss of school-based privileges, where students fail to comply with the local school policy on mobile phones, including if they refuse to relinquish their phones to school staff when asked. Schools should return mobile phones to the student or parent/carer at the end of the school day.

Consistent with Ministerial Order 1125, suspensions are to be reserved for serious misuses of a mobile phone in schools (for example, cyberbullying).

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- all students at Altona North Primary School
- students' mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recesses and lunchtime

DEFINITIONS

Mobile phone

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.

POLICY

- From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.
- Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the school will provide secure storage.

- The school will manage non-compliance with their local mobile phone policy in accordance with the Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy.
- The school will develop a local policy on students using mobile phones, which must include how this ministerial policy will be implemented.
- Exceptions to the policy may be applied if certain conditions are met. Exceptions can be granted by the Principal or Assistant Principal/s. Exceptions will be documented.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the policy:

- may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met
- can be granted by the Principal, or by the teacher, in accordance with this policy and the school's local policy on mobile phones
- 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 three 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
- reasonable adjustments to a learning program because of a disability and/or learning difficulty, documented in an Individual Learning Plan or Individual Education Plan

Health and wellbeing-related, including:

- students with a health condition documented in the Student Health Support Plan
- students who are young carers documented in a localised student record

Risk related to managing students offsite, including where students:

- travel to and from excursions documented in risk assessment planning
- are on an excursion or camp documented in risk assessment planning
- are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission documented in risk assessment planning
- have a dual enrolment and/or need to undertake intercampus travel documented in risk assessment planning

Exclusions

Wearable devices, iPads and other personal devices are excluded from the policy, however, if they are brought to school, students must switch off all notifications during the school day.

This policy does not apply to:

- Travelling to and from school
- Wearable devices
- iPads and all other personal devices

Secure storage

Mobile phones owned by students are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/carer's) risk. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Please note that the school does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft. Students and their parents/carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items. Refer to the Department's [Personal Goods policy](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, we will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. Students are required to ensure their phones are handed into the school administration office to be placed in a lockable cupboard.

Enforcement

The school will enforce the policy under their existing student engagement policies, for example, through detention or a loss of school-based privileges, where students fail to comply with the local school policy on mobile phones, including if they refuse to relinquish their phones to school staff when asked. The school will return mobile phones to the student or parent/carer at the end of the school day. Consistent with Ministerial Order 1125, suspensions are to be reserved for serious misuses of a mobile phone in schools (for example, cyberbullying). Reporting of some incidents involving mobile phones to a relevant authority may be necessary under the Department's [Reporting and Managing School Incidents \(Including Emergencies\) Policy](#).

Excursions and Camps

In most circumstances, students will not be allowed to bring their mobile devices on overnight school camps or excursions. The school will provide students and their parents/carers with information about items that can be brought to special activities and events, including mobile phones.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [Mobile Phones – Department Policy](#)
- [Personal Goods – Department Policy](#)

Reference:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-using-mobile-phones>

Please refer also to the school's *Bullying Prevention & Response Policy*, *Student Sexual Offending & Problem Sexual Behaviour Policy*, the *Photographing, Filming & Recording Children Policy*, the *Personal Property Policy* and the *Student Wellbeing & Engagement Policy*.

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy, first developed in this format in May 2019, updated in October 2019 and again in August 2020, will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update mid-June 2020).

Consultation Recommended

School Council Approval No Longer Required

The policy will be communicated to the school community annually e.g. on the school website or other communications portal such as Compass. It is recommended that School Council be consulted and its views taken into account when this policy is adopted.