



# MOBILE PHONES

## POLICY

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 (Vic).

### Policy

This policy outlines the requirements of the Minister for Education relating to students using mobile phones during school hours.

### Summary

- From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones 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.
- 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 to school, the school must provide secure storage.
- Schools are required to develop a local policy on students using mobile phones, which must include how this ministerial policy will be implemented.
- Schools will manage non-compliance with their local mobile phone policy in accordance with their existing student engagement policies.

### Details

From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones 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, which must include how this ministerial policy will be implemented.

A downloadable policy template for Victorian government schools is available on the Department's intranet at the [School Policy Templates Portal](#) (login required). Schools can adapt the template to suit their local circumstances provided that it is consistent with this Ministerial policy.

### 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.

Students undertaking workplace learning activities, for example, work experience or a VET course offsite must comply with the policies of the individual workplace or training organisation.

The mobile phone 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 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

## Enforcement

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](#).

### 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.

### 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 \(Vic\)](#)

This policy is scheduled for review: December 2021

This policy was last ratified by School Council on

**March 2020**