

Policy on the Use of Mobile Phones by Students at School

'Off and away all day'

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Version 1 – 12/12/2019

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the requirements of the Minister for Education and Training relating to students' use of mobile phones during school hours in Tasmanian Government Schools.

2. Policy Statement

The Department of Education takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student wellbeing and the development of social and emotional skills very seriously. We live in a technology rich world where mobile phones are an important tool for life and work. However, research and consultation with the Tasmanian community has found that mobile phones are a distraction from learning, and impact the development of positive personal relationships at school.

From Term 2 2020, subject to the exemptions set out below, Principals **MUST** implement restrictions on the use of mobile phones during school hours by all students from Kindergarten to Year 12.

These restrictions **MUST** be formalised in a specific policy for their school using the template 'Use of Mobile Phones by Students at School Policy' which **MUST** include how this policy will be implemented.

The restrictions **MUST** comply with the following elements

- Subject to the exemptions set out below, students **MUST** have their mobile phones switched off and stored during school hours.
- Principals **MUST** determine an appropriate storage approach, in consultation with their School Association.
- Principals **MUST** require students with 'smart watches' to set them to 'aeroplane mode'.
- Where restrictions are not adhered to by students, Principals **MUST** utilise their existing 'Respectful Student Behaviour Policy'.
- All communication from families with students during school hours **MUST** be through the school office.

Exemptions

Principals **MAY** determine exemptions to the restrictions in accordance with this policy and the school's local policy on use of mobile phones by students at school.

Where an exemption is granted, students can only use their mobile phone for the purposes for which the exemption was granted.

Exemptions **MAY** be granted for reasons including, but not limited to:

- For students in Years 11 and 12, in consultation with their School Association.
- For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is required because of a disability and/or learning difficulty.
- For students with health conditions.
- For students who are young carers.
- For students undertaking school activities outside school hours that are not on school campuses.
- Where students have been given direct instruction by a teacher to use their mobile phone for educational purposes (including under the Bring Your Own Technology Policy and Procedures).
- For students experiencing extenuating circumstances other than the above, where agreed by the Principal.

Exclusions

This Policy does not apply in the following circumstances:

- Out of school hours care on school campuses.
- Travelling to and from school prior to the start of the school day, and after the end of the school day.
- For students on work experience or work placement. Students **MUST** comply with workplace policies.
- For students who are undertaking vocational education and training not on a school campus. Students **MUST** comply with the TAFE, Registered Training Organisation, or workplace policies.

3. Related policies

- [Respectful Student Behaviour Policy](#)
- Bring Your Own Technology Policy – currently under review

4. Related procedures

- [Bring Your Own Technology Procedures](#)

5. Supporting information/tools

- Model School Policy – schools can adapt the model policy to suit their local context provided that it is consistent with this policy. This model policy includes information for Principals to inform their consultation with their School Association on appropriate storage options.
- Frequently Asked Questions for Families
- Model School Newsletter Article

6. Definitions

Mobile phone

Is a mobile device with access to a cellular (telecommunications) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. This includes smart watches, tablets and associated listening accessories, such as, but not limited to, headphones and earbuds.

Must

Is to be interpreted as being mandatory.

Principal

Is the person in charge of a school or their delegate.

School Activity

Refers to school-endorsed activities for students that are held:

- at a venue which is outside of school campus or school property; or
- on school campus but outside of schools hours.

School activities may include; a sports or swimming carnival, an excursion, school camp, or end of year concert.

School Association

Is made up of the parents, staff and approved community members of a school. An Association exists for each Tasmanian State School, including primary schools, high schools, district schools and colleges.

School Hours

Is the official start time of the school day for students, to the official end time of the school day for students.

Appropriate Storage

Is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so.

**The Department of Education does not accept liability for loss or damage to private property or personal effects used or stored in buildings owned or used by the Department of Education.

7. Legislation

- Secretary's Instruction No 3 for Unacceptable Behaviour of Students and Volunteers at, and Visitors to, State Schools or School Activities
- Secretary's Instruction No 4 for Suspension, Exclusion, Expulsion or Prohibition of State School Students

Internal Information Only*

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