

Primary student use of mobile phones and personal devices



Purpose

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets or laptops that are not part of a separate Bring Your Own Device arrangement. This policy applies while students are at school, or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours.

Rationale

Mobile phones are important modern-day communication tool. They can easily be improperly used, lost, damaged or stolen and therefore require effective management.

The increased ownership of mobile phones and other digital devices requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents/carers and other community members take steps to ensure that these devices are used responsibly. This policy is designed to ensure that potential issues can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits of mobile phones and other digital devices (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our community.

This policy also applies to students, staff and parents during school camps, excursions and extra-curricular activities.

Mobile phone use for primary school students

The department's position is that primary aged students cannot use their mobile phones and personal devices at school during school hours. The department and the school recognise that there are legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school. This may include:

- to ensure their safety while travelling
- so that parents can contact them outside of school hours.

During the school day students are not permitted to access or use their mobile phones or other personal devices. Students must switch off or mute their devices before storing them at the beginning of the school day. They will not be able to access their device until the end of the school day.

Storage of personal devices

Student mobile phones and personal devices will be handed to class teachers at the beginning of each school day to be stored securely within the classroom and are to be collected by students from teachers at the conclusion of each day.

If the student does not comply

Misuse of personal devices may result in disciplinary action. Consequences of misuse may include, but are not limited to:

Implement consequences as per the school's Behaviour Education policy for inappropriate behaviour in using a mobile phone.

Contact parents/carers if students are found to be inappropriately using mobile phones or electronic devices.

If required (eg as a result of continual refusal / non-compliance with this policy) a phone may be confiscated. Any confiscation should be managed through school leadership. Any phones confiscated in these circumstances will be stored safely in a secured filing cabinet in the Principal's office. The return of the phone will be managed through contact and agreement with parents / carers.

If reasonably believed a student has inappropriate material on their mobile phone, confiscate the phone and secure as evidence until it can be handed to SAPOL.

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

Enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Consider requests for exemptions from the policy from parents on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.

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.

Support staff with the implementation of the policies.

Offer and organise proactive programs/information sessions (e.g. cyber bullying).

School staff

Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment.

Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment at times when a device is being used by a student in line with an approved exemption or in circumstances where students' devices are stored in the classroom.

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 department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Make sure that any student personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent) at the end of each school day. Note: students may not collect mobile phones or personal devices on behalf of other students.

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.

Be vigilant and address issues as they arise.

If hosting an assembly or event, remind parents at the beginning about the duty of care with respect to the taking of photos of other people's children and, where possible, provide an opportunity for parents to take photos of their child/ren following the assembly.

Model their commitment to this policy by storing mobile phones out of sight and not using them during teaching time or other formal contact times, unless specifically negotiated with line manager.

TRT staff are requested to keep mobile phones on silent and respond to calls for bookings at the next appropriate break.

Personal phone calls should not be taken or made while staff have duty of care for students – in the classroom, on yard duty or while supervising any activity on or off school grounds.

Switching mobile phones off or turn to silent in professional meetings.

Have access to mobile phones when required for excursions, camps and yard duty.

Staff are reminded of the following boundary violations in mobile phone and other digital device usage from the DECD Guidelines “Protective Practices for Staff in their interactions with children and young people” p.9

- Photographing, audio recording or filming children or young people via any medium when not authorised by the site leader to do so and without parental consent.
- Using personal rather than school equipment for approved activities, unless authorised by the site leader to do so.
- Correspondence or communication (via any medium) to or from children and young people when a violation of professional boundaries is indicated and where the correspondence has not been provided to the site leader by the staff member.
- Still/moving images or audio recordings of children and young people on personal equipment or kept in personal locations such as car or home that have not been authorised by the site leader.

Students

Comply with the requirements of the school’s policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff.

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. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action at school, even if this happens outside of school hours. Parents of students affected by any bullying or harassment will be advised to lodge a complaint with their service provider or SAPOL as this type of behaviour contravenes the telecommunications act. **It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person.**

Respect others’ rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.

Bring their mobile phone to school with their parent’s/carer’s permission as noted on the Mobile Communication Devices Consent form.

Bring mobile phones to school at owner’s risk. The school will not be involved in disputes and/or investigations over damage, loss or theft. If a student brings a phone/device to school, it is his/her own responsibility.

Hand their phone in to teachers for secure storage at the start of the day and collect them at the end of the day. Note: students may only collect their own mobile phone or personal device.

Student mobile phones and personal devices must be switched off during secure storage. Teaching and learning are our core business and for this reason, mobile phones and personal devices should not disrupt classroom lessons by ringing or beeping.

Not use mobile phones during school hours unless under the clearly defined instruction and supervision of a staff member. Staff deciding to authorise this use of student owned devices must do this in full consultation with a member of leadership and with consent of parents/carers.

Not use their mobile phones or personal devices to create, send or listen to or view messages, text, still shots, video, music or podcasts whilst at school unless under staff instruction and supervision and with parental/carer permission.

Not lend their mobile phones or personal devices to other students to use.

Not contact their parents/carer using their mobile phones or personal devices except with leader's permission. All essential contact (i.e. illness) is to be conducted by staff.

Parents will be reminded that in cases of emergency, the front office admin is the first point of contact.

Student mobile phones and personal devices should be switched off on entering the school's boundary and not turned on again until the child is ready to leave the school grounds.

Student mobile phones and personal devices are NOT to be taken into the yard at any break time or taken into toilets.

Parents

Support the implementation of the school's policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy.

Use the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school). Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance 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 device) in a safe, responsible and respectful way.

Sign a copy of the Mobile Communication Devices Consent form where the need for their child to have a mobile phone at school is considered essential.

Take and make mobile calls outside teaching and learning areas, including Assemblies and outside of office areas, and turn phones off when in meetings, interviews and classrooms.

Make all calls to children via the school's front office, with assurance that messages received prior to 3.10pm will reach their destination.

Not use mobile phones or personal devices to take photos or video of children other than their own.

Not use mobile phones or personal devices to take photos or video of children if requested by staff.

Adults who are participating in activities or in learning spaces should have their phone switched to silent to avoid disruption to learning.

Photographs taken of children by community members must not be uploaded to the internet or published in any way, unless permission is sought from the parents of each child in the image.

Note that there are some students in our school who MAY NOT have their photo taken under any circumstances. Privacy principles prevent advising parents which students are to be excluded from photos.

Communication and review

Consultation has been sought with the school community via online survey.

This Policy will be displayed on the school website and communicated to parents in hard copy and via the regular school communications app School Star.

This policy will be reviewed in 2022

Supporting information

For additional information please refer to:

Marion Primary School Behaviour Education Policy

Marion Primary School Bullying and Harassment policy

Marion Primary School Mobile Phone and Personal Device Permission

(This page to be returned to the school front office)

I _____ (Name of Parent / carer)

request that my child _____ in Room _____

be permitted to have a mobile phone whilst at school. I have outlined (below) the following reason/s (health, safety or personal) that justify the possession of a mobile phone at school.

- ♦ I have discussed the conditions of use with my child and they understand that the phone must be switched off and secured with their teacher while they are within the school grounds.
- ♦ I understand that students misusing personal mobile phones at school or causing a nuisance will be brought to the attention of a member of the leadership team, who will confiscate the phone for safe-keeping until collected by a parent/carer.
- ♦ We further accept that the school accepts no responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of a mobile phone.
- ♦ I also understand that the school reserves the right to prohibit students from taking mobile phones on camps or excursions.

Signed _____
Parent/carer

Date _____