BURRA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Respect - Responsibility - Honesty

Secondary student use of mobile phones

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 purposes of this policy, personal devices include mobile phones, smart watches and other digital 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 guidance for students to become informed, safe, respectful, and responsible digital citizens.

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 their teachers and peers. The aim of this 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 and part-time employers can contact them outside of school hours
- so they can be contacted about a person under their own care, where applicable
- 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 school staff in line with this policy regarding their personal devices.

The Department for Education's policy requires all 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.**

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 away. This includes taking off and storing any wearable technology that fits the definition of this policy, such as smartwatches.

• Students are required to keep all personal devices, along with their school bags and any other belongings not required for class, in their individual lockers. Students are reminded to ensure they lock their lockers securely between uses and keep their padlock combination private.

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 support policy.

In the event of non-compliance with the rules:
1st Offence: The mobile phone is confiscated and parent / guardian contacted.
2nd Offence: The mobile phone is confiscated, lunch time detention and parents contacted and asked to collect.
3rd Offence: Mobile phone confiscated, internal suspension and parent contacted and asked to collect.
Subsequent offences: enactment of school student behaviour policy at the discretion of leadership.
Confiscated phones will be kept in a cabinet in the front office and will be handed back to parents or students by leadership staff.

Where a 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 South Australia Police if the behaviour is suspected to be illegal.

Exemptions
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 help manage a health condition
• the device is a negotiated adjustment to a learning program for a student with disability or learning difficulties
• the device is used for translation by a student with English as an additional language
• the student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have more ready access to their personal device, such as being a parent themselves or a primary carer to a younger sibling or unwell family member.

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 recorded in the student's file or health care/learning plan as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities
Principal
Make sure:
o The school's policy has been endorsed or ratified by governing council and is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families
o there is a process for regular review of the school's local policy
o secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff and individual lockers at the school provides for students to store their belongings. Students are required to provide their own locks to secure lockers
o processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.

Enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.
• Consider requests for exemptions from the policy from parents or independent students due to 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 school staff to do the same. Support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.
• Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate or illegal use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legal requirements.

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.
• 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 legal requirements. Student use of mobile phones and personal devices
• Ensure 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 any student personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent) by 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.
• Switch all personal devices off, or into flight mode, on arrival at school each day and store it away as specified in this policy.
• 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 school staff member as soon as possible if feeling unwell or experiencing any other issues at school. Use the school's sign-out processes in all cases where requiring early collection from school.

Parents
Support the school's implementation of this policy, including the consequences for 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 or 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 or to make contact with their child during school hours (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.

Supporting links

BCS - Student Behaviour Management Policy and Bullying and Harassment policy including Cyber Bullying and Harassment Student use of mobile phones and personal devices

• Found something offensive online that the website will not take down? Report it to the Australian Communications and Media Authority Report offensive content: Home page | ACMA

• Australian Communications and Media Authority Found something that may be an online scam or fraud? Report it to Scamwatch

Other useful websites:

• www.staysmartonline.gov.au
• www.cybersmartkids.com.au
• Report it to the Police

Communication and review

This policy was last ratified by the Governing Council in November 2022 (also in consultation with staff and SRC)
This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.
To be reviewed in 2025