



## **For Parents-Frequently asked questions - mobile phones in schools**

### **Who does the new mobile phone policy apply to?**

The new policy will apply to all Victorian government school students.

### **When will the new policy take effect?**

Schools will be required to implement the new policy from Term 1, 2020.

### **Can students still bring a mobile phone to school?**

Students can bring a mobile phone to school, but it must be turned off and stored securely during the school day. Parents can still contact their children through the school's office in emergencies.

### **Who is responsible for my child's mobile phone when at school?**

Mobile phones brought to school are not covered by the school's insurance if they are lost, stolen or damaged. For more information, please see the Department's [Personal Goods policy](#).

### **Why is this new policy important and what is the evidence-base for it?**

This policy will help focus students' attention on learning in the classroom by providing them with:

- a safe environment to learn without distractions or inappropriate phone use (including cyberbullying)
- greater opportunity for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunchtimes.

A summary of [research articles](#) that provide information about the reason for the policy is available.

### **Will there be exceptions for use?**

The new mobile phone policy allows for a small number of exceptions. For example, where the mobile phone is used to manage a health condition, or to support a classroom learning activity. Teachers can grant a classroom-based learning exception. All other exceptions are handled by the school principal. More information about exceptions can be provided by your child's school.

### **Phones are part of every young person's life these days so why the change in policy?**

Technology is important, but there needs to be a balance between the benefits and risks. The Victorian Curriculum recognises this, and is rich in digital learning opportunities to assist students to

develop digital literacy skills at school. Where there is a genuine educational need to have mobile phones in the classroom, teachers can instruct their students to bring their phones to class.

### **How do I contact my child in an emergency?**

In emergencies, parents can still contact their children through their school's office.

### **What will be the consequences for students caught with a mobile phone during school time?**

Students who use their mobile phone at school will be treated in a manner consistent with their school's existing disciplinary policies.

### **Does the new policy include other mobile devices, e.g. smart watches?**

Yes, wearable smart watches have a similar functionality to mobile phones and will therefore be stored with mobile phones during school hours.

### **What is my role as a parent or carer?**

Parents and carers are encouraged to support their children to become safe and responsible technology users.

### **What advice is available to families when it comes to managing screen time and in supporting safe online behaviours?**

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) provides a number of resources for families:

- [7 Tips for Managing Screen Time](#) – Provides tips and advice on what families can do to help their child(ren) balance their time on and offline
- [Online Safety: A guide for parents and carers](#) – Guide offering practical skills and advice about how to tackle the big issues associated with online activity
- [Screen Smart Parent Tour](#) – Explores topics such as social media, screen time, protecting personal information, cyberbullying, contact with strangers and accessing inappropriate content.

The Department of Education and Training also has a number of resources for parents and students on its [Bully Stoppers](#) webpage.

### **What if I have additional questions about the policy?**

The Department's [Students Using Mobile Phones policy](#) can be accessed. Please refer to the Caulfield South Primary School's local mobile phone policy for more specific information. This can be located on our school website.

Gayle Yardley

Principal