



ELTHAM HIGH SCHOOL

POLICY DOCUMENT

Student Mobile Phone Management

INTRODUCTION

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

PHILOSOPHY

The Victorian Government takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student safety and wellbeing, and the development of social skills and positive behaviour, very seriously. On this basis, the Hon. James Merlino MP, Minister for Education, announced that a new mobile phone policy would take effect from Term 1 2020.

Whilst the Victorian Government acknowledges that we live in a technology-rich world where mobile phones are an important communication tool, research has found that mobile phones can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school. The unregulated presence of mobile phones in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion.

At recess and lunchtime, opportunities for students to communicate with each other face-to-face or be involved in physical activity are also valued, rather than students being focused on a mobile phone, particularly when they are using it to engage with social media.

This new policy acknowledges that technology is increasingly affecting how students learn and communicate. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose. For a small number of students with particular health and wellbeing needs, an exception to the policy may also be granted.

This policy will remove a major distraction from our classrooms, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn in a more focused, positive and supported environment.

POLICY STATEMENT

From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.

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 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 table 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.

There are three categories of exceptions:

Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception	Suggested documentation
For specific learning activities (class-based exception)	Unit of work, learning sequence
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability and/or learning difficulty	Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan

Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

Specific exception	Suggested documentation
Students with a health condition	Student Health Support Plan
Students who are Young Carers	A localised student record

Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	Suggested documentation
Travelling to and from excursions	Risk assessment planning documentation
Students on excursions and camps	Risk assessment planning documentation
When students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission	Risk assessment planning documentation
Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake intercampus travel	Risk assessment planning documentation

Exclusions

In the following circumstances, the new mobile phone policy does not apply:

Description	Rationale
Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC)	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours.
Out-of-school-hours events	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours.
Travelling to and from school	Policy is not applicable when travel falls outside of school hours.
Wearable devices	All notifications must be switched off.
iPads and all other personal devices	All notifications must be switched off.
Students undertaking workplace learning activities e.g. work experience	The policy is not applicable for students on work experience. Instead, students are expected to comply with a workplace's policies.
Students who are undertaking VET	The policy is not applicable for students undertaking VET offsite (as opposed to on school grounds). Instead, students are expected to comply with a TAFE or registered training organisation's policies.

GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

Granting Exemptions

Exception Category	Exception	Approver	Documentation
Learning related exceptions	For specific learning activities (class-based exceptions)	Teacher	Unit of work, learning sequence
	For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of disability and/or learning difficulty	Principal	Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan
Health and wellbeing	Students with a health	Principal	Student health support

related exceptions	condition		plan
	Students who a young carers	Principal	A localised student record
Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite	Travelling to and from excursions. Students on excursions and camps. When students are offsite (not school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission. Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake intercampus travel	Principal	Risk assessment planning documentation

Implementation process

Students should:

- Not have their mobile phones at school.
- If need before or after school, phones should be switched off and locked in the students locker for the entire school day. This includes recess and lunchtime. Students are not to use their phones at any time after the first bell (8:55am) and before the last bell (3:10pm).
- If found in possession or using their phone the student will be sent to the general office to surrender their phone for the remainder of the day.
- The phone can be collected from the office at the end of the school day or when they leave if earlier.
- After two instances students will be reminded that on the third occasion the phone will be kept until a parent meeting is organised to return the phone and discuss the next steps.
- Following the parent meeting any other instances will be regarded as failing to follow instructions from the Principal in line with the Student Engagement Policy and may lead to the suspension of the student from school on the following ground:

'The student consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.'

Grounds for Suspension

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/suspensionconsiderations.aspx>

Contact with parents in the event of illness or other urgent matter will be managed through the school office after a student has been referred to or attended sick bay for treatment or assistance. In support of this, the school's expectations are that communication in such instances is best managed through the school office.

Security of property

Mobile phones owned by students are brought to schools at the owner's risk. Please refer to the Department's Personal Goods policy.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the Eltham High School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so and will be provided

through student lockers that are lockable, or if surrendered, a lockable cupboard stored in the General Office.

The school seeks community support in the implementation of this policy.

BASIS OF DISCRETION

The School Council has responsibility for the establishment, evaluation and review of school policies. The School Principal has the responsibility to ensure that school policies are implemented effectively.

Minor changes to the policy (changes that will not affect the spirit of the policy) may be made at the discretion of the Principal.

The Policy Review and Evaluation process will recommend any major changes to the policy to School Council.

RELATED POLICIES

Safe Connections Policy

Prevention of Bullying Policy

Teaching and Learning Policy

Student Engagement Policy

Students Using Mobile Phones Policy - DET

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spaq/safety/Pages/mobilephones.aspx>

Grounds for Suspension

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/suspensionconsiderations.aspx>

REVIEW

This policy should be reviewed every 3 years.

Date Endorsed: __ / __ / 200_ *{insert date of Council Approval here}*

Executive Officer

Eltham High School Council

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND WORKING PARTY INFORMATION:

This policy was written by: Darren Squires

Consultation has taken place with the relevant group(s) in the following list:

Group	Consultation ✓
School Operations Committee	
Staff	✓
Students (randomly selected group)	✓ (Principal's Advisory Group)
Parents (randomly selected group)	
Members of the Community	
Other (where relevant please specify)	
Planning and Policy Review Team of Council (Mandatory)	✓
School Council (Mandatory)	✓

