



# WATERVALE PRIMARY SCHOOL



## MOBILE PHONE AND PERSONAL DEVICES POLICY - STUDENTS

### RATIONALE:

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.

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.

### 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.

### 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 can contact them outside of school hours
- 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**

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. Outline how/where students will store away their devices at your school.

- Students in Reception to Year 6 are required to hand in their personal devices at the Front office desk upon arrival at school each day, to be securely stored by office staff. Students will be able to collect their device from Front Office at the end of the school day, or when being signed out early by a parent.

### **If the Student does not Comply**

Misuse of mobile phones or personal devices may result in disciplinary action which includes but is not limited to the device being confiscated. Confiscated devices will be taken to the front office for secure storage and parent contacted. Confiscated devices will remain in secure storage until they are returned to a parent. Where there is a repeat of misuse or refusal to follow reasonable instruction to hand in a device when asked, we will refer to the school behaviour management policy which may include further steps such as admin time out, internal suspension or suspension.

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.

### **Process:**

In the first instance, students will be verbally reminded to take their device to the office for secure storage. When they have handed in their personal device(s) they will be stored securely by staff. The student will be given a green slip to show their teacher on return to class and can collect their device(s) back from the front office at the end of the school day.

Where a student repeatedly and intentionally breaches the requirements of this policy, or refuses to follow a staff member's direction to hand over a personal device that has been used inappropriately, a member of the school leadership team will contact home.

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.

### **Exceptional circumstances**

**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:
  - The school's policy has been endorsed or ratified by governing council and is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families
  - there is a process for regular review of the school's local policy
  - secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff
  - 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.
- 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 INFORMATION**

This policy links with the following site based policies to support all learners:

- school behaviour code
- behaviour support policy
- school anti-bullying policy
- ICT user agreements.

These are accessible on the Watervale Primary School Website <https://www.watervalps.sa.edu.au>

### **COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW**

Outline:

- the policy can be accessed by students, staff, and families through our web page or in the front office
- consultation has been undertaken with students through the School Leadership group and the school community to make local decisions in line with this policy
- how often the policy will be reviewed biannually or as required

Ratified by Governing Council on: 15 May 2023

Signed by Governing Council Chairperson:

