

HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE MOBILE PHONE POLICY

RATIONALE

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.

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Hume Central Secondary College's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices during school hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Hume Central Secondary College and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

DEFINITIONS

A mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. "For the purpose of this policy, "mobile phone" refers to mobile phones and any device that may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone such as smart watches."

POLICY

Hume Central Secondary College understands that students may bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school.

At Hume Central Secondary College:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information)
When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

PERSONAL MOBILE PHONE USE

In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Hume Central Secondary College during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless an exception has been granted. Where a student has been granted an exception, the student must use their mobile phone for the purpose for which the exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

SECURE STORAGE

Mobile phones owned by students at Hume Central Secondary College are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/carer's) risk. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Please note that Hume Central Secondary College does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft. Students and their parents/carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items. Please refer to the Department's [Personal Goods policy](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Hume Central Secondary College will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Hume Central Secondary College students are required to store their phones in their lockers, or if surrendered, a lockable cupboard stored at the relevant Campus Reception.

IMPLEMENTATION

ACCEPTABLE USE OF MOBILE PHONES – GUIDELINES

While on College grounds, students' mobile phones are to be switched off and are to be kept in the student's locker during school hours. These devices are not to be used at recess or lunch. Where the student is off school grounds on a College activity (i.e. sporting event, excursion, etc.), the mobile phone is to be kept in a school bag. If a parent/guardian needs to contact their child during the school day, they can contact reception at the relevant campus and staff will pass a message on to the student. If a student has an urgent and important need to contact their parents/guardians during the school day, there are College phones available for their use. Students should contact reception or their Team Leader / Coordinator.

CONSEQUENCES FOR UNACCEPTABLE USE

If students do not adhere to Acceptable Use of Mobile Phone Guidelines, the following consequences will occur:

- **Consequence - First Offence:**

The mobile phone will be confiscated and stored at campus reception. The phone will be securely held, and the student will only be permitted to collect the phone at the end of the school day.

- **Consequence - Second and Subsequent Offences:**

The mobile phone will be confiscated and stored at campus reception. The phone will be securely held, and a parent/guardian will be asked to come to the College to collect the phone. A parent/guardian will be sent an SMS as soon as is practicable to inform them of this confiscation. In the event that a parent/carer is unable to collect the mobile device from school, an alternative arrangement can be negotiated by the parent/carer and member of Principal Class.

- **Subsequent offence support action:**

To support behavioural improvements when students are found in possession of their mobile device on multiple occasions, the following Support Action can be implemented following discussions with the parent/carer:

- Student to leave their device at front office administration each morning (prior to 8.45am) and collect each afternoon (after 2.45pm) for a period of 2 weeks

- **Repeated Offences:**

Following the parent/carer collection of the phone or implementation of an alternative consequence/measure in response to subsequent offences, the College will view this ongoing behaviour as the student failing to follow instructions in line with the Student Engagement Policy and may lead to the suspension of the student from school on the following grounds: 'The student consistently behaves in an unproductive manner that interferes with the wellbeing, safety or educational opportunities of any other student.'

Second offences will reset at the end of each academic semester.

Grounds for Suspension:

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

- **Serious Offences:**

Where the College deems an incident using mobile phones to be serious, the College reserves the right to respond as it deems appropriate (i.e. it may involve the suspension of students, or the matter being referred to the police). In such cases, parents will be notified immediately.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to the policy:

- may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically,
 - Health and wellbeing-related exceptions; and
 - Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite.
- can be granted by the principal, or by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#).

The three categories of exceptions allowed under the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#) are:

1. Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception	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 or learning difficulty	Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

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

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	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

Where an exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone for the purpose for which it was granted.

CAMPS, EXCURSIONS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Hume Central Secondary College will provide students and their parents and carers with information about items that can or cannot be brought to camps, excursions, special activities, and events, including personal mobile phones.

EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience
- Students who are undertaking a VET program offsite at another institution / TAFE

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Student Learning Behaviour Policy
- Mobile Phones – Department Policy
- Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items
- Personal Goods – Department policy

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required or due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Reviewed	To Be Reviewed	College Council
December 2022	3 years	Not required to be endorsed at College Council