

New mobile phone policy – frequently asked questions for families

Why is the mobile phone policy important and what is the evidence-base for it?

The mobile phone policy was introduced in 2020 to reduce distractions in the classroom, reduce cyberbullying in schools and improve face-to-face interactions in the school yard.

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

A recent Review of the policy has found that it has reduced the use of mobile phones during school hours, with a range of benefits noted by principals and teachers, including:

- greater student focus on their learning
- increased student socialisation or physical activity during breaks
- fewer incidents of cyberbullying during school hours
- fewer critical incidents involving mobile phones during school hours.

Who does the mobile phone policy apply to?

The policy applies to all Victorian government school students.

Can my child/ren 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 administration 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 Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy.

Are there exceptions for use?

The 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 found [here](#).

How do I contact my child in an emergency?

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

What will be the consequences for my child/ren if they are caught with a mobile phone during school hours?

Schools will enforce the policy under their existing student engagement policies, for example, through detention or a loss of school-based privileges.

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

Wearable devices, iPads and other personal devices are excluded from the Department's mobile phone policy. However, the Department's policy also allows schools to choose to include other mobile devices as part of their local policies. At our school, other mobile devices are included in our local policy.

If mobile devices are brought to school, students must switch off all notifications during the school day.

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 several 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 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 mobile phone policy can be accessed [here](#). Please refer to your school's local mobile phone policy for more specific information on the implementation of this policy in your school community.