

PERSONAL MOBILE DEVICES

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community Beechworth Secondary College's policy requirements, and expectations regarding the safe and appropriate use of personal mobile devices by students, at school or during school activities.

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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Beechworth Secondary College and,
2. All personal mobile devices that have not been approved by Beechworth Secondary College Principal class for the purpose of carrying out and engaging in the teaching and learning of the curriculum.

DEFINITIONS

Personal mobile devices are portable computing and communication devices such as smartphones and tablet computers with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. This definition does not include laptop computer devices or smart watches.

POLICY

Beechworth Secondary College understands that students may bring a personal mobile device to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school or to extra-curricular activities.

- During school hours (8:45 – 3:30), personal mobile devices must be switched off and silent and locked securely in the student's locker, or be
- Labelled, switched off and silent and stored securely with administrative staff at the school office.
- Smart watches are not to be connected to mobile devices throughout the school day.
- Students are not permitted to access their personal mobile devices during lunchtime or recess.
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met in consultation with the Principal or Assistant Principal (see below for further information).
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

Personal mobile device use

In accordance with the Department's Mobile Phones Policy issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Beechworth 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.

Students who use their personal mobile device inappropriately at school may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

In some circumstances, students' personal mobile devices may be confiscated and stored securely in the secure room at the Administration office. In these circumstances, the mobile device will usually be returned/students will be welcome to collect their mobile device at the conclusion of the school day to the student or their parent/carer at the end of the school day. An example of an exception to this return may be in the event that the mobile device is required for Police Investigation.

Secure storage

Personal mobile devices owned by students at Beechworth 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 Beechworth 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.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Beechworth Secondary College will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Beechworth Secondary College students are required to store their phones locked with an approved lock in the locker allocated to that student, or logged and locked in the secure storage within the Administration office.

Enforcement

Any enforcement option considered by staff of Beechworth Secondary College will be expected to comply with the Department's [Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items](#) policy relating to 'other items' which states that staff "should instruct the student to hand over the item(s) and if the student refuses to hand over the items, implement the relevant disciplinary provision within the student code of conduct."

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Beechworth Secondary College may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy.

At Beechworth Secondary College 'inappropriate use of mobile phones' is **any use during school hours (8:45-3:30)**, unless an exception has been granted, and particularly use of a mobile phone:

- in any way that disrupts the learning of others
- to send inappropriate, harassing or threatening messages or phone calls
- to engage in inappropriate social media use including cyber bullying
- to capture video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community without their permission
- to capture video or images in the school toilets, changing rooms, swimming pools and gyms
- during exams and assessments

Exemptions

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 Assistant Principal, 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 and excursions

In most circumstances, students will not be allowed to bring their personal mobile device on overnight school camps or excursions. Beechworth Secondary College will provide students and their parents and carers with information about items that can be brought to special activities and events, including personal mobile device.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- Wearable devices
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience
- Students who are undertaking VET

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Mobile Phones – Department Policy
- Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items_
- Personal Goods – Department policy
- BSC Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

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