



MOBILE PHONES – STUDENT USE

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Ascot Vale Special School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and personal communication devices during school hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Ascot Vale Special School and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and personal communication 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

Ascot Vale Special School understands that students may bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school.

At Ascot Vale Special School:

- 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 Ascot Vale Special School 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 Ascot Vale Special School 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 Ascot Vale Special School 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.

Refer to the Ascot Vale Special School's Personal Property Policy and the Department's [Personal Goods policy](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Ascot Vale Special School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Ascot Vale Special School students are required to hand their phones into the Office for secure storage during the day.

Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Ascot Vale Special School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing student engagement policies - *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*

At Ascot Vale Special School inappropriate use of mobile phones is **any use during school hours**, 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

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

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	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

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

Ascot Vale Special School 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

- Travelling to and from school on public transport
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience
- Students who are undertaking VET

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement, Code of Conduct, Personal Property.*
- [Mobile Phones – Department Policy](#)
- [Personal Goods – Department policy](#)

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated on 29/10/2019 and is scheduled for review on October 2022.