



Mount Erin College

Students Mobile Device Policy

Purpose of this Policy

This Policy outlines the requirements of the Minister for Education relating to students using mobile phones during school hours.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, a **mobile phone** is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

Summary – Key Information

- From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored in their locker during our school hours of 8:20am – 2:45pm. At Mount Erin this will also apply to Smart Watches, Earbuds, Earphones, AirPods, I Pads and any other electronic devices. (with the exception of a school approved laptop)
- Exceptions to the Policy may be applied if certain conditions are met. Exceptions can be granted by the Principal. Requests for an Exception need to be made in writing to the Principal stating the reasons. Exceptions must be documented.
- Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the school must provide secure storage. Mount Erin College provides each student with a locker. Mount Erin College provides good quality Combination padlocks which can be purchased from the College for \$20. We have a strong preference for students to use the Combination padlocks provided by the College as we help students who forget their code instead of having to cut off different styles of padlocks which then need to be replaced.
- Schools are required to develop a local Students Using Mobile Phones Policy, which must include how this Ministerial Policy will be implemented.
- Schools will manage non-compliance with their local Mobile Phone Policy in accordance with their existing Student Engagement Policies.

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. At Mount Erin College students WILL NOT be given explicit permission to access and use such devices by the classroom teacher – Instead we will provide bookable classroom sets of recordable devices that teachers can book for a specific purpose. For a small number of students with particular health and wellbeing needs, an exception to the Policy may also be granted by the Principal.

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.

Policy

From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring their mobile phones to school must store them securely in their locker at the start of the day – 8:20am – and keep them there until the end of the school day – 2:45pm. If a student is involved in after school classes or detentions, – the end of these activities will constitute the end of the school day).

The Mount Erin College Mobile Phone Policy is based on the Victorian Government Schools Mobile Phone Policy.

*Students at Mount Erin College do **NOT** need to use their mobile phones in classes for Learning Purposes as the College has a one to one Notebook Program as well as sets of Notebook Computers that are available for class use. In addition, a number of rooms have Desktop Computers available for student use. If there is a need to film or take photo's for classwork – the classroom teacher will book a class set of cameras that will be sufficient for this.*

Exceptions

Exceptions to the Policy

- may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met
- can be granted, and documented, by the Principal, in accordance with this Policy and the College's local Policy on Mobile Phones

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

There are TWO Categories of Exceptions:

1. Health and Wellbeing Related Exceptions

Specific exception

Suggested documentation

Students with a health condition

Student Health Support Plan

Students who are Young Carers

A localised student record

2. Exceptions Related to Managing Risk when Students are Offsite

Specific exception	Suggested 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

Exclusions

In the following circumstances, the new mobile phone policy does not apply:

Description	Rationale
Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC)	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours. If a student has an after school detention or Principal Class Detention – the phone policy stands until the detention is finished.
Out-of-school-hours events	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours.
Travelling to and from school	Policy is not applicable when travel falls outside of school hours. If a student arrives to school after 8:20am – these devices must be switched off and remain not visible or used until they are securely stored in their locker as soon as possible after they arrive at school.
Wearable devices	All Smart Watches, AirPods, Earphones, Earbuds and other wearable devices are included in the Policy and must be switched off and secured in the student's locker between 8:20am and 2:45pm.
iPads and all other personal devices	iPads and all other personal devices are included in the Policy and must be switched off and secured in the student's locker between 8:20am and 2:45pm.

Students undertaking workplace learning activities e.g. work experience

The Policy is not applicable for students on Work Experience. Instead, students are expected to comply with a Workplace's Policies.

Students who are undertaking VET

The Policy is not applicable for students undertaking VET offsite (as opposed to on school grounds). Instead, students are expected to comply with a TAFE or Registered Training Organisation's Policies.

Secure storage

Mobile phones owned by students are brought to schools at the owner's risk. Neither the Department nor Mount Erin College has insurance for student property that is lost or damaged. Please refer to the Department's [Personal Goods](#) Policy.

- Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the school must provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so.
- Mount Erin College provides each student with a locker. It is the responsibility of the student to provide their own lock. Combination padlocks can be purchased from the College for \$20. (as per earlier paragraph)

Enforcement

Schools will enforce the Policy under their existing Student Engagement Policies, for example, through detention or a loss of school-based privileges, where students fail to comply with the local College Policy on mobile phones or wearable devices, including if they refuse to relinquish their phones to school staff when asked.

Consistent with Ministerial Order 1125, Suspensions are to be reserved for serious misuses of a mobile phone in schools (e.g. Cyberbully).

Enforcement at Mount Erin

- At Mount Erin, if a student is caught using their phone in any location of the school between the times of 8:20am and 2:45pm the phone will be confiscated and taken to the front office where it will be securely stored. The phone will only be returned when it is picked up by a Parent/Guardian. There will not be any 1st, 2nd or 3rd offence arrangements – ALL phones confiscated to the front office MUST be picked up by a Parent/Guardian for every offence.
- Staff will be provided with envelopes to carry with them – should they need to confiscate a phone it will be safely placed into an envelope and the students name written on the front. At the earliest convenience it will be taken to the front office.
- If a staff member confiscates a phone, it is their responsibility to record this on Compass outlining the details of where, when and how. Once submitted the Parents/Guardians will receive a text message generated through Compass which will alert them that their child/s phone has been confiscated and that they must pick it up from the front office.
- If a student refuses to hand over a phone and attempts to not comply with this Policy, they will receive an automatic After School Detention. The phone will also still be confiscated and must be picked up by a Parent/Guardian.
- For repeat offenders, more severe consequences, such as Friday Principal Class Detentions from 3 – 5 pm, will apply on a case by case basis should this occur.

Additional Information

The Students Using Mobile Phones Policy should be read in conjunction with the Mount Erin College Acceptable Use of Mobile Devices Policy which is available on the College website:

www.mounterin.vic.edu.au

Review

This Policy due for Review in November 2021.

This policy was last ratified by the College Board in

November 2019