

# MOBILE PHONE & COMMUNICATION DEVICES POLICY

## Rationale

To explain to our school community the Department's and Birralee Primary School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices (e.g. smart watches), during school hours.

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Birralee Primary School
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including before and after school, recess and lunchtime.
3. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought to school excursions or camps

**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 or other device that can make or receive calls, and may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone (e.g. as smart watches).

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

At Birralee Primary School:

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

## Implementation

### Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's 'Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy' issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Birralee Primary School during school hours, including lunchtime and recess.

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 or similar devices brought to school by students 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 or similar device to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

Please note that Birralelee Primary 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.

Where students bring a mobile phone or similar device to school, Birralelee Primary School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Birralelee Primary School, students are required to hand their device to their classroom teacher to be placed in a lockable cupboard or drawer (NB. This includes smart watches or similar devices that can be used for communication to take calls, messages or photos).

During before and after school care, the responsibility for the safety of mobile devices lies with the student. Devices must be kept in a zipped school bag and not used during attendance at either of these out-of-hours services.

### **Enforcement**

Students who use their personal mobile phones or similar device inappropriately at Birralelee Primary School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, the school's Code of Conduct and the Anti-Bullying policy.

At Birralelee Primary School, inappropriate use of mobile phones or similar device is **any use during school hours**, unless an exception has been granted for particular use. Phones or similar device may not be used;

- 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, on camps and excursions in changing rooms or dormitories, or at 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 — Student Use Policy'.

The three categories of exceptions allowed under the Department's 'Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy' are:

1. Learning-related exceptions
2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions
3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite.

Note: Some examples of health and wellbeing related exceptions may include: a student with diabetes using their mobile phone to monitor their blood sugar or for a student for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty.

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

### **Camps, excursions and extracurricular activities**

Birralelee Primary 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. Mobile phones or similar devices cannot be used on camps or excursions as camera alternatives.

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's two year review cycle.

### **Exclusions**

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC)
- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
  
- References:
  - Student Wellbeing and Engagement
  - Code of Conduct
  - Anti-Bullying Policy
- DET: Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy:  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/Mobile-phones-in-schools.aspx>
- DET: Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy:  
<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/claims-property-damage-and-medical-expenses/policy>

### **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three year review cycle.