

Student use of mobile phones and personal devices at Urrbrae Agricultural High School



Scope

This school policy is implemented in line with the Department for Education's [Student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy](#), which applies to all government schools. This document provides direction to students, staff, and families about managing personal devices that students choose to bring to school.

With the widespread and increasing ownership of mobile phones and other devices among students, it is critical that schools, in partnership with families, provide clear guidance for students to become informed, safe, respectful, and responsible digital citizens. This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal devices, including mobile phones, that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include but are not limited to personal devices that include mobile phones and any other digital devices with the capability of connecting to telecommunication and/or internet networks, such as smartwatches. Laptops, ipads and computers are part of a separate "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) arrangement and are managed by the Acceptable Use of Digital Devices Policy. The MPPD policy applies while students are at school or attending an authorised school activity, such as an excursion during school hours.

By setting expectations for the permissions of personal use of digital devices and what is or not permitted in the learning environment, it enables students to form habits of use that differentiate between appropriateness of use.

Rationale

With the widespread and increasing ownership of mobile phones and other devices among students it is critical that schools, in partnership with families, provide clear guidance for students to become informed, safe, respectful, and responsible digital citizens.

It is the Department for Education's position that access to personal devices during school hours must be managed so that students can be fully present in their learning and in their interactions with their teachers and peers.

The aim of this policy is to help promote:

- safe environments with reduced negative impacts of inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and critical incidents that involve mobile phones
- classroom environments where teachers can teach, and students can learn, free from distractions caused by personal use of devices
- use of breaks as quality time away from screens, encouraging physical activity and play and meaningful face-to-face connections with peers.

Personal devices at school

This policy takes effect from 8:20am (first bell) every day and concludes at 3:20pm (Wednesday at 2:35pm).

Students are permitted to bring personal devices to school:

- Our school recognises that there are legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school. This may include:
- ensuring their safety while travelling to and from school
- enabling parents to contact them outside of school hours.
- enabling a student to be contacted about a person under their care, where applicable
- to be used during school hours in line with an exemption that has been approved by the school under this policy.

While students are at school, or attending school activities, they must comply with any reasonable directions given by school staff in line with this policy regarding their personal devices.

The Department for Education's policy requires all students at all department schools to **keep personal devices 'off and away' between the start and end of each school day, and while they are attending school activities off-site, such as camps and excursions.**

Students will not be able to access their personal devices at any time during school hours, unless they have received an approved exemption or granted permission from the school to use the device for a specific, agreed reason. This means both physical access and remote access (e.g. connecting with the personal device via hotspot or using paired headphones).

Use and confiscation of Bluetooth earbuds, airpods and earphones (BE):

If a student is wearing wired or corded headphones and can be clearly seen to be connected to a BYOD device, then this is permitted.

If a student is wearing, bluetooth while using their BYOD this is permitted with staff permission a staff member believes that the BE is connected to their phone, they can request a phone check. If a phone is "off" this would indicate that the BE is connected to the BYOD. If the phone is on, regardless of whether it is connected to the BE or not, then a phone can be confiscated.

Storage of personal devices at school

The local decision of Urrbrae Agricultural High School is that the students' personal devices can be stored on their person, or in lockers (UAHS is a bagless school). In both circumstances they must be "off and away"

Currently students choose to carry their MPPD, therefore they make the choice to manage the consequences. This means students can carry their mobile phone on their person but it must be switched off and not in use. This also potentially includes the removal of any wearable technology that fits the policy's definition of personal devices, such as smartwatches.

Students in the Middle School have a lock supplied for their lockers. Students in the Senior School who store phones in their locker **must** supply their own lock from home.

Responses to non-compliance

Currently students choose to carry their MPPD, therefore they make the choice to manage the consequence. This means students can carry their mobile phone on their person but it must be switched off and not in use.

For non-compliance within the classroom environment, the MPPD means confiscation of the device and the appropriate process undertaken. Depending on the non-compliance the behaviour may be managed by the school's behaviour management policy. If the student refuses to hand the phone over within the classroom environment, then the first response will be the student will be sent to Withdrawal and managed through the Student Behaviour Management policy.

For non-compliance outside of the classroom environment (without exemptions) then the consequence can include phone confiscation.

If the student does not comply with taking the phone to Student Administration or giving to the staff member, then the student potentially can have a "take home" suspension and will be asked to leave after the parents are contacted to inform them of the situation.

Inappropriate use of MPPD may result in disciplinary action which includes but is not limited to "take home" suspension through to external suspension. For repeated breaches, Student Behaviour Management Procedures will apply.

If a student films or records an incident, then consequences still exist for that student. The phone is confiscated, and the consequence is through the Student Behaviour Management policy.

If MPPD's are confiscated, then they are confiscated for the day (regardless of reason, ie canteen payment, contacting home) and may be collected at the end of the day or signing out from Student Administration. If a phone is confiscated, then parents/carers can contact the school through the appropriate channels in an emergency.

Where a student's misuse of personal devices is serious, it may be necessary for the school to consider responses in line with the department's suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students procedure, or to contact South Australia Police if the behaviour is suspected to be illegal.

Storage during confiscation:

When a phone or MPPD is confiscated, the devices will be stored in Student Administration until the end of the day. The owner (student or parent) can collect the device at the end of the same school day, or prior if signing out. Student Administration will indicate on Daymap that the phone has been returned.

Exemptions

Exceptional circumstances

Individual students may have extenuating reasons for needing access to their personal device during school hours, such as where:

- the device is used to monitor or help manage a health condition
- the device is a negotiated adjustment outside the classroom for a student with disability or learning difficulties.

- the student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have more ready access to their personal device.

Please contact the school if you need to request an exemption due to exceptional circumstances. These requests will be considered by the principal (or delegate) on a case-by-case basis. If approved, the exemption will be recorded in the student's file or health care/learning plan as appropriate.

STAFF-led Exemptions

Temporary exemptions can be negotiated with staff members with the approval of Learning Area or Year Level Coordinators. These exemptions are based upon singular use and therefore permission must be sought every time staff led exemptions are undertaken. Therefore, students cannot refer to previous lesson permissions in their current lesson. If there is a change in staff member through the lesson then a new permission must be granted from their current staff member. Students cannot refer to another staff member giving permission around MPPD.

The types of exemptions are:

- A staff member may, at their discretion, give permission for students (either on an individual or whole-class basis) to use their personal device in the classroom for a specific, agreed learning purpose.
- Individual students may negotiate with their class teachers on an ad-hoc basis if they wish to access a personal device for a specified non-educational purpose (such as employment or wellbeing reasons)
- The Deputy and the staff member-in-charge may determine (subject to planning approval from the Principal in line with the Camps and Excursions Procedure) to allow students to bring personal devices on a camp or excursion for learning purposes or to facilitate contact with their families at specified and supervised times.
- Break times are not curriculum and therefore a staff member on duty cannot grant permission, for the use of phones.

If students are given permission under these exemptions, then the students can “turn their phone on” while undertaking the activity in which permission has been granted. Once that activity has ceased or at the conclusion of the activity, then students are reminded to put their personal devices back on “off and away” phones must be turned off, put away and be out of sight. If the phone is sighted outside of this activity the phone can be confiscated.

No staff member can grant permission to use the phone outside of the specified learning activity, such as going to the toilet and using their phone on the way. Once the student is outside of that specific purpose then the phone must “be off and away.” Any breach of this would result in the phone being confiscated.

Permission Zones:

Permission zones are areas within the school where the student can turn their phone on without first seeking permission but they must undertake that specific activity (such as payment made) and then at the conclusion of that activity turn the phone back off and put it away. These permission zones are:

- Canteen (to pay for food). Students are allowed to have phones visible at point of pay only
- Front of Student Administration. (to pay for excursions) Students are allowed to have phones visible at point of pay only

- Student Wellbeing Office (this does not include the quiet room. Phones must be off in the quiet room, unless exemptions have been granted.)

(The use of phones in the library for signing out a book is not a permission zone)

MPPD First Aid:

Students are not permitted to use their MPPD device while in First Aid. However, a staff member who has duty of care in that designated area, can grant permission to use the phone in relation to contacting a parent/carer for the student to leave school grounds. Once the phone call has taken place and the arrangements made, then the phone must be turned “off” until the parent/carer arrives, otherwise the phone could be confiscated.

Roles and responsibilities

School Leadership will ensure that:

- The MPPD policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff and families
- Secure storage is provided for student MPPD that are handed in to Student Administration.
- The school provides individual lockers and locks to Middle School students that enables them to store their MPPD securely. Senior school students (10-12) supply their own locks.
- Processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.
- The school’s policy is enforced and the school responds to instances of non-compliance.
- Reporting and responding to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices is in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.
- The school considers requests for exemptions from the school policy from parents, carers or independent students on a case-by-case basis. The school makes sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about student exemptions.

School staff

- Model responsible and respectful use of personal devices and assist children and young people to develop the tools to self-manage their behaviour.
- Ensure students who are given permission to access their personal device use it appropriately and only for the specified purpose and turn their devices off after the exempted activity has concluded.
- Make sure that any student personal devices confiscated are appropriately recorded in Daymap.
- Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment or create a classroom environment free from distractions caused by personal use of devices. This will also deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment and the development of responsible MPPD usage.
- Respond to instances of non-compliance in line with the school’s policy.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with DfE policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

- Make sure that any MPPD confiscated is taken to Student Administration for safe storage (either by themselves or the student) and returned to the student (or their parent/carer) at the end of the day or prior, if signing out.

Students

- Ensure their mobile phone is switched “off” during school hours so that they can be fully present in their learning and in their interactions with staff members and peers.
- Comply with the requirements of the school’s policy.
- Follow all reasonable directions from any school staff regarding the phone policy
- Be expected to use appropriate manners and courtesy when seeking permission for any phone usage.
- Use the MPPD in a safe, responsible and respectful way and support peers to do the same.
- Communicate respectfully with others and not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person.
- Respect others’ rights to privacy and not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.
- In Year 12 study is not supervised but permission must be sought prior to the phone being “turned on”.
- Students in Year 11 Study Periods the same conditions apply as a normal classroom. This is due to study periods being supervised by a staff member.

Parents

- Support the school’s implementation of this policy, including the consequences for non-compliance.
- Support the implementation of the school’s policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy.
- Use the school’s formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school).
- Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience an issue at school.
- Use appropriate manners and professionalism when seeking exemptions for any phone usage.
- Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their MPPD in a safe, responsible and respectful way.

Supporting links

It’s recommended that you provide links to any other policies and procedures that may interact with your local policy on student use of mobile phones and personal devices such as:

- school anti-bullying policy
- BYOD policy, ICT user agreements.

Communication and review

- Consultation has been undertaken with students through extended homegroup programs, SRC, staff, outside communities and the broader school community through Governing Council. Consultation and review takes places in Term 3 every third year to ensure the policy is up to date.

- The policy can be accessed from the website under the Parent Information tab.

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Questions, concerns, and further information

This policy has been implemented by the school in line with the Department for Education's 'Student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy'. You can find more information about this policy, and links to further resources for parents about personal devices and online safety, on the department's website:

[Mobile phones and personal devices at school \(education.sa.gov.au\)](https://www.education.sa.gov.au/mobile-phones-and-personal-devices-at-school).

If you have any questions or concerns about the department's policy, you can contact the department at:

Email: education.customers@sa.gov.au or submit an [online feedback form](#)

Phone: Free call: 1800 088 158

Please contact the school directly to discuss the possibility of an exemption if your child has exceptional circumstances as outlined in this policy.