

Wodonga Middle Years and Senior Secondary College Policy Manual

000 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

000 Mobile Phones & Audio Equipment

School Policy and Advisory Guide Reference: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/mobilephones.aspx	Last Update Oct 2019
Last Ratified by School Council	December 2019
Line Manager	AP Student Operations

Rationale

There are growing bodies of evidence showing that the possession and use of mobile phones in schools is having a detrimental effect on the learning of students. WSSC and WMYC have based their Mobile Phones & Audio Equipment policy around this research and DET advice.

Some of the research that has informed this policy is:

The Mere Presence of Your Smartphone Reduces Brain Power, Study Shows

Intro article <https://news.utexas.edu/2017/06/26/the-mere-presence-of-your-smartphone-reduces-brain-power>

Full study <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/691462>

Key points:

- the mere presence of one's own smartphone may occupy limited-capacity cognitive resources, thereby leaving fewer resources available for other tasks and undercutting cognitive performance
- these cognitive costs are highest for those highest in smartphone dependence
- participants with their phones in another room significantly outperformed those with their phones on the desk, and they also slightly outperformed those participants who had kept their phones in a pocket or bag
- it didn't matter whether a person's smartphone was turned on or off, or whether it was lying face up or face down on a desk - having a smartphone within sight or within easy reach reduces a person's ability to focus and perform tasks because part of their brain is actively working to *not* pick up or use the phone

Psychology and neuroscience blow-up the myth of effective multitasking

Intro article <https://www.inc.com/scott-mautz/psychology-and-neuroscience-blow-up-the-myth-of-effective-multitasking.html>

Key points:

- We sacrifice our power of full presence when we're multitasking, and we do so for a perceived benefit of improved productivity that simply doesn't exist.
- Research also shows that multitasking, i.e. trying to do two cognitive things at the same time, simply can't be done--the mind doesn't work that way.
- Studies have shown that it takes four times longer for the brain to recognize new things (further slowing down task completion) and that we have a much lower retention rate of what we learn while we are multitasking

Mobile phones in the classroom: A helpful or harmful hindrance?

Intro article <https://psychopaedia.org/learning-and-development/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a-helpful-or-harmful-hindrance/>

Key points:

- mobile phones can have a negative impact on learning through distraction and that their removal from the classroom can yield an improvement in student performance, especially for the most vulnerable
- students who did not use smartphones while participating in a lecture wrote 62 per cent more information in their notes and were able to recall more information than their phone-using counterparts
- With problematic phone use now considered a risk behavior alongside alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use, schools should ensure they are addressing the psychological, social and health issues associated with technology (e.g. a lack of sleep from late night phone use, cyber bullying, sexting)

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How smart is it to allow students to use mobile phones at school?

Intro article <https://theconversation.com/how-smart-is-it-to-allow-students-to-use-mobile-phones-at-school-40621>

Key points:

- After schools banned mobile phones, test scores of students aged 16 increased by 6.4% of a standard deviation
- It is important to note that these gains are prominent amongst the lowest achievers

DET Vic School Policy Advisory Guide – Students Using Mobile Phones

Available here <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/mobilephones.aspx>

- From Term 1 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.
- 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.
- Where students bring a mobile phone to school, the school provides secure lockers for the storage of the devices.
- In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless an exception has been granted.

Implementation/student use policy

The College discourages students from bringing and using mobile phones and personal audio equipment. The College does not take any responsibility for the security of mobile phones or audio equipment.

- Should a parent wish to contact a student urgently, the General Office will deliver messages to students as required.
- Should a student wish to contact a parent urgently they can ask the office administration staff to contact a parent/ guardian.

If a student brings a mobile phone and/or audio equipment to college it is their responsibility to abide by the following:

CLASS TIME:

- **The mobile phone must be switched off and left in the students' locker.**
- **Students who do take their phone to class will be asked by the teacher to place it in the eSmart box and advised that it should be left in their locker from this time forward.**
- **Students who do not abide by the above will have their device confiscated by the teacher. It will be the responsibility of the student to collect it from the teacher at the end of the day.**
- **Repeat offenders will have the phone confiscated and a parent will be required to collect it from the front office at the end of the day.**
- **Students who refuse to comply with the above information will be managed in line with the Wodonga Middle Years Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy.**

The College advises students not to bring their phones to school and does not take responsibility for any loss or damage.

OUTSIDE CLASS TIME:

- **The mobile phone must be switched off and left in the students' locker.**
- **Students who are seen with their mobile phones at recess or lunch time will be asked to take their phone to the front office where the device will be locked away in a secure locker for the remainder of the day. Students will be able to collect the device at the end of the day.**

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- Students who refuse to comply with the above information will be managed in line with the Wodonga Middle Years Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy.
- Repeat offenders will have the phone confiscated and a parent will be required to collect it from the front office at the end of the day.

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 by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#).
- This policy does not apply to iPads or any other personal device.
- This policy does not apply to students undertaking work experience

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)	As determined by the teacher
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty	As outlined in the students Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

Specific exception	Documentation
Students with a health condition	Student Health Support Plan (TBD)
Students who are Young Carers	A localised student record (TBD)

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	Documentation
Travelling to and from excursions	Determined by the supervising teacher
Students on excursions and camps	Determined by the supervising teacher
When students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission	Determined by organising teacher
Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake intercampus travel	Determined by organising teacher

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

Maintenance

College staff will remain up to date with current research into mobile phone use and periodically provide information to parents and students of this research.

College staff will monitor mobile phone use in the College and support teachers and students to uphold the policy.

Parent information

Rationale – The College recognizes that a majority of students have a mobile phone and that they are a part of modern day life. We are also aware of the impact these devices can have on the learning of students

Expectations

It is an expectation of the College that parents support the mobile phone policy to enable their child to get the maximum benefit from class time.

Should parents need support or advice they are encouraged to contact the College or access the resources below

eSafety advice <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

iParent - Where you can learn about the digital environment and how to help your child have safe and enjoyable online experiences. <https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/iparent>

Reporting Cyberbullying: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/complaints-and-reporting/cyberbullying-complaints/cyberbullying-a-guide-for-parents>

Student information

Young and eSafe <https://www.esafety.gov.au/youngandesafe>

Staff expectations

All WMYC and WSSC staff are expected to abide by the same expectations of parents and students and not use their devices in class or on yard duty other than for educational or emergency purposes.

Staff are required to maintain the school expectations of no devices in class and utilize the resources provided. Should staff require support to implement the policy they should seek this support from AP Student Operations or House Leaders.

Related Policies, Legislation and Regulations

It is against the law to photograph people without their permission in a college setting. Students who use their mobile phones to take photographs of people out of class and/or create disruption will be sanctioned.

Students who use mobile phones/text messaging for harassment purposes will be sanctioned and leave themselves open to prosecution by the police.