



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Purpose

To explain to our school community the Department's and Alkira's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices; such as smart watches.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students at Alkira College and,
- Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, inclusive of recess and lunchtime.

Definitions

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**.

A **mobile phone** is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

- **Secure storage** is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so.
- **School hours** refers to the time from the start of the first scheduled/timetabled activity e.g. homegroup

Policy

Alkira College understands that students may bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school; however, the following will apply if this choice is undertaken-

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored within their locker, during school hours.
- All students will be allocated a locker and a school supplied lock. All lockers must be securely locked, at all times. Mobile phones brought onto school premises during school hours must be stored in this facility. It is the individual student's responsibility to ensure that this locker is locked at all times.

- The College will consider the use of student air pods or equivalent during school hours as a breach of the College's mobile phone policy
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information)
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers must 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 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 Alkira College 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.**

Note:

- Students who bring a mobile phone to school do so at their own risk. The Department of Education (DET) and Alkira College does not accept any responsibility or hold insurance to cover student loss, theft or accidental property damage to student property.
- Students and their parents / carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate personal insurance for valuable items.

Administration / Enforcement of Mobile Phone Policy

At Alkira College, inappropriate use of mobile phones is **any use during school hours** (unless an exception has been granted), and particularly the use of a mobile phone which:

- Used in any way disrupts the learning of others.
- Used to send inappropriate, harassing or threatening messages or phone calls to engage in inappropriate social media use including cyber bullying.
- Used to capture video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community without their permission.
- Used to capture video or images in the school toilets, changing rooms and all other learning spaces
- Used during exams and assessments.

Alkira College's enforcement of this policy will comply with the Department's *Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items Policy*, relating to 'other items', which states that staff ... ***"should instruct the student to hand over the item(s) and if the student refuses to hand over the items, implement the relevant disciplinary provision within the student code of conduct."***

All College staff have the responsibility to enforce the mobile phone policy and have the permission to request a student hand over their phone when requested. The security of confiscated items rests with the staff member responsible and in the case of a confiscated mobile phone, the staff member will be required to follow arrangements in place for the safe return of the mobile phone to the student via the process. It is worth noting the staff member is able to take the phone to a safe and secure area for storage and return at the end of the day.

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Alkira College will be issued with consequences consistent with our school's management strategies. *It is worth noting that staff and students were included in the formation of our enforcement system.*

Student hands phone over and the following consequences are enacted:

- **Strike 1** – A school generated SMS/email goes home to parent/guardian stating student has a phone breach and consequently is given a lunchtime detention.
- **Strike 2** – A school generated SMS/email goes home to parent/guardian stating student has a phone breach and consequently is given an afterschool detention.
- **Strike 3** – A school generated SMS/email goes home to parent/guardian who are now required to come in for a meeting/phone the College and speak to a Head of House before the phone is returned. Head of House issues action/consequence going forward which may include actions like: student required to leave phone at office, ISS etc. The student will also be placed on a mobile phone contract.

Student refuses to hand over phone the following consequences are enacted:

You will be followed up by your Head of House and you will go straight to strike 3 and/or further consequences.

Acceptations/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

Exception Categories

Where an exception is granted by the Principal or the Principal's nominee, the student can only use the mobile phone for the purpose for which it was granted and timeframe.

The three exception categories allowed under the Department's Mobile Phones Policy are:

1. Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception	Documentation
Specific learning activities (class-based exception)	To undertake a unit of work and/or learning sequence, linked to a specific timeframe.
Students requiring reasonable adjustment to a learning program (disability or learning difficulty)	An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be created, specific to the student's needs and timeframe.

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

Specific exception	Documentation
Students with a health condition	A personalised <i>Student Health Support Plan</i> will be created.
Students who are Young Carers (For example; providing care to a parent with health issue).	A localised student record will be created as a young carer may need to use their mobile phone to discuss health issues with medical professionals and the person they are caring for, during the school day.

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	Documentation
Travelling to and from excursions	 <p>The school will determine such in line with Risk Assessment Planning documentation.</p>
Students on excursions and camps	
When students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission	
Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake inter-campus travel	

Camps, excursions and extra-curricular activities

Alkira College 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. The College will determine this in line with Risk Assessment Planning documentation, on a case by case basis.

Staff are responsible for informing students prior to any camp, excursion and/or extra-curricular activities the guidelines around mobile phone use, if any. School rules apply as per normal on any of the activities inclusive of the mobile phone ban.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- Out-of-school hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- iPads and laptops.

Supporting Documents/Further Information

Department's *Mobile Phones* policy

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

Department's *Personal Goods* policy

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/pages/personalgoods.aspx>

Department's *Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items* policy

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/property.aspx>

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on April 2020 and is scheduled for review April 2021.