

# Student use of mobile phones and personal devices at Clapham Primary 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.

For the purposes of this policy, **personal devices** include mobile phones, smart watches and other digital devices that are capable of sending or receiving messages or calls and/or able to connect to the internet, and personal laptops or iPads that are not owned by the school and have not been brought to school by the student under a separate Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) agreement.

## 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

Students are permitted to bring personal devices to school:

- as a measure to ensure their safety while travelling to and from school
- so they can be contacted about a person under their own 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](#) 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).

## Storage of personal devices at school

Students will turn their devices off or place them in flight mode before putting them away. This includes taking off and storing any wearable technology that fits the definition of this policy, such as smartwatches.

- upon arrival, all students must switch off their mobile phones and personal devices and hand them into the front office for secure storage in the office safe.
- devices will remain in the safe throughout the school day and must not be accessed until students are dismissed at the end of the day.
- students must sign in their devices on arrival and sign it out on collection. All devices can be collected from the front office after the final bell.

## Responses to non-compliance

Where students use a personal device at school without an approved exemption, or use it inappropriately, a response will be provided in line with the school's behaviour support policy.

- If a student is found to have not handed in their mobile phone or personal device, the device will be confiscated and securely stored in the office. Parents/caregivers will be notified.
- Repeated breaches will be addressed according to the Clapham Primary School behaviour support policy.

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 for Education's [suspension, exclusion and expulsion of students procedure](#), or to contact South Australia Police if the behaviour is suspected to be illegal.

## 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 to a learning program for a student with disability or learning difficulties
- the device is used for translation by a student with English as an additional language
- the student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have more ready access to their personal device, such as being a parent themselves or a primary carer to a younger sibling or unwell family member.

Please contact the school for details about how 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 and details about

how and when the student is permitted to access their personal device will be shared with relevant staff members.

The following temporary exemptions may be made available to students at the discretion of individual teachers or leaders.

All exemptions are subject to the device being used appropriately and only for the purpose specifically permitted by the staff member. Personal devices must be put 'off and away' immediately after the exempted activity has concluded, and not brought to future lessons/activities without explicit staff permission.

- Class teachers may give permission for students (on an individual or whole-class basis) to use personal devices in the classroom for a specified learning activity.
- Individual students may be given permission by staff on an ad-hoc basis to access a personal device for an agreed non-educational purpose (such as expected contact from a part-time employer or for a wellbeing reason).
- Students may be permitted to bring personal devices on a camp or excursion for learning purposes and/or to facilitate contact with their families at specified and supervised times. Expectations regarding student use of devices on the camp or excursion will be detailed in parent consent information.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Principal

- Make sure:
  - The school's policy has been endorsed or ratified by governing council and is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families.
  - there is a process for regular review of the school's local policy.
  - secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff and individual lockers or locks that the school provides for students to store their belongings are appropriately.
  - processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.
- Enforce the policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.
- Consider requests for exemptions from the policy from parents or independent students due to exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions in this category are documented and that relevant staff, including temporary relief teachers, are informed about students with an exemption.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support school staff to do the same. Support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate or illegal use of personal devices in line with Department for Education policy and procedures and any legal requirements.

## **School staff**

- Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment. Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment.
- 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 Department for Education policy and procedures and any legal requirements.
- Ensure students who are given permission to access their personal device use it appropriately and only for the specified purpose, and store their personal devices away after the exempted activity has concluded.
- Consider and approve, at discretion, temporary exemptions in line with the conditions outlined in this policy.
- Make sure that any student personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent) by the end of the same school day.
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children. Use mobile phones for work-related/emergency purposes only when students are under their care.

## **Students**

- Comply with the requirements of this policy and follow all reasonable directions from the principal and school staff.
- Switch all personal devices off, or into flight mode, on arrival at school each day and store them away as specified in this policy.
- If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with an exemption under this policy, do so in a safe, responsible, and respectful way and support peers to do the same.
- Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass, or threaten another person.
- Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film, or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.
- Notify a school staff member as soon as possible if feeling unwell or experiencing any other issues at school so that staff can follow up appropriately and facilitate contact with families as needed. Use the school's sign-out processes in all cases where requiring early collection from school.

## **Parents**

- Support the school's implementation of this policy, including the consequences for non-compliance.
- Encourage their child not to bring a personal device to school unless necessary. Understand that the Department for Education does not provide insurance for accidental loss or damage to personal property that is brought onto school grounds (however, claims may be met under the Department for Education's public liability insurance where the loss or damage can be attributed to a negligent act or omission on the part of the school – the school will contact the Department for Education for advice if this may be the case).

- Use the school’s formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school or to make contact with their child during school hours (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.
- Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone (or other personal device) in a safe, responsible, and respectful way.

### **Our website contains the following policies: Supporting Links**

- We recommend that you refer to additional policies and procedures that are relevant to our local policy on student use of mobile phones and personal devices. These may include:
- School Behaviour Code and Behaviour Support Policy
- School Anti-Bullying Policy
- BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) Policy and ICT User Agreements
- These supporting documents provide further guidance and ensure consistency across our school's approach to the use of personal devices.

## **Communication and review**

### **Access to the School’s Policy**

The school’s policy is readily accessible to students, staff, and families. It can be found on our school website, and printed copies are available at the front office upon request. This ensures transparency and ease of access for all members of our community.

### **Consultation with Students and the School Community**

Consultation with students, staff, and the broader school community is fundamental to the development and review of our policies.

When the policy is due for review, input from students, staff, families, and relevant community groups will be sought to ensure all perspectives are heard and considered.

### **Policy Review Cycle**

Our policy is reviewed on a regular cycle to ensure it remains current and effective. Reviews occur every three years, or sooner if required by changes to Department for Education guidelines or legislation. The next scheduled review date will be March 2027.

## **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 for Education’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 for Education’s policy, you can contact the Department for Education at:

**Email:** [education.customers@sa.gov.au](mailto: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.