

## MOUNT RIDLEY P-12 COLLEGE

# STUDENT MOBILE PHONE USE POLICY

### Preamble

This policy outlines the expectations with respect to the use of mobile phones at Mount Ridley Prep - 12 College (MRC).

### Rationale

The Victorian Government takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student safety and wellbeing, and the development of social skills and positive behaviour, very seriously. In line with the Victorian Government policy, MRC acknowledges that we live in a technology-rich world, where mobile phones are an important communication tool. Research has found that mobile phones can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school. The unregulated presence of mobile phones in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion.

At recess and lunchtime, opportunities for students to communicate with each other face-to-face or be involved in other activities are also valued, rather than students being focused on their mobile phones, particularly when they are using it to engage with social media. This new policy acknowledges that technology is increasingly affecting how students learn and communicate. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose. For a small number of students with particular health and wellbeing needs, an exception to the policy may also be granted.

This policy will remove a major distraction from our classrooms, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn in a more focused, positive and supported environment.

### Guiding Principles

This policy applies to:

1. All students at MRC; and
2. Students' personal mobile phones brought onto school premises during school hours.

Definitions:

**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 and any device that may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone.

**School Hours** refers to (8.50am – 3.10pm), including recess, lunchtime and out of school hours Redemption.

### Implementation

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

At MRC:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored (during school hours);

- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information); and
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers can reach their child by calling the College's Main Administration 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 at MRC during school hours, unless an exemption has been granted.

Where a student has been granted an exemption, the student will be issued with a mobile phone exemption pass. Students granted an exemption must use their mobile phone for the purpose for which the exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner. Students must present their mobile phone exemption pass when requested to do so.

### Secure storage

Mobile phones owned by students at MRC 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. Please note that MRC 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. Refer to MRC's Personal Property Policy AND/OR the Department's Personal Goods policy.]

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, MRC will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At MRC students are required to store their phones in their allocated lockers (Years 5 – 12 ) or handed in to the Early Years Administration Office (Years Prep – 4) to be placed in secure storage.

### Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at MRC may be issued with consequences consistent with our College's existing student engagement policies [Student Engagement Policy and Anti Bullying Policy].

At MRC inappropriate use of mobile phones relates to **any use during school hours**, unless an exemption has been granted. This may include, but not limited to, using the mobile phone:

- to correspond with persons within or outside the College;
- 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, changing rooms, swimming pools and gyms; and
- during exams and assessments.

### 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 College Principal, or by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's Mobile Phones Policy and MRC's Application For Mobile Phone Use in the Classroom.

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 where the teacher has been granted approval through the <u>Application For Mobile Phone Use in the Classroom</u> )	Unit of work, learning sequence or one off activity
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty	Individual Education Plan

### **2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions**

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

### **3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite**

Specific exception	Documentation
Travelling to and from excursions	Risk assessment planning documentation
Students on excursions and camps	Risk assessment planning documentation
When students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission	Risk assessment planning documentation
Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake intercampus travel	Risk assessment planning documentation

Where an exemption is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone for the purpose for which it was granted. As previously stated, where a student has been granted an exemption, the student will be issued with a mobile phone exemption pass.

### Camps, excursions and extra-curricular activities

MRC 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.

### **Exclusions**

This policy does not apply to:

- Out-of-school-hours events;
- Travelling to and from school;
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience; and
- Students who are undertaking offsite VET programs.

## **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

- MRC Application For Mobile Phone Use in the Classroom
- MRC Application for Mobile Phone Use Exemption
- MRC Student Engagement Policy
- MRC Code of Conduct Agreement
- MRC Personal Property Policy
- MRC Anti – Bullying Policy
- Mobile Phones – Department Policy
- Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items - Department Policy
- Personal Goods – Department policy

## **Evaluation**

As part of the College's review cycle this policy will be reviewed in 12 months or when changes are made to DET guidelines.

Date policy created: 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

Date of next review: 2020