



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact southern.autistic.sch@education.vic.gov.au

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Southern Autistic School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices such as smartwatches, tablets etc during school hours.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Southern Autistic School and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, a mobile phone refers to a mobile phone and any device that may connect to or have similar functionality to mobile phone such as smart watches and tablets, with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

POLICY

Southern Autistic School understands that students may bring a personal mobile phone / device to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school or on the school bus.

At Southern Autistic School:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and remain in their bags for the duration of the day, until they leave the school grounds.
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information).
- When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones – Student Use Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones / devices must not be used at Southern Autistic School 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 / device for the purpose for which the exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

Storage

Mobile phones / devices owned by students at Southern Autistic School 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 Southern Autistic School 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 the Southern Autistic School's Personal Property Policy.

Where students bring a mobile phone / device to school, students are required to store their phones in school bags **until such time that they have left the school grounds**. Alternatively, arrangements can be made to leave devices on the school bus, at the parent/carer / student's own risk.

Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Southern Autistic School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing student engagement policies - *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Anti-Bullying* policies.

At Southern Autistic School inappropriate use of mobile phones is **any use during school hours**, unless an exception has been granted, and particularly use of a mobile phone / device:

- in any way that disrupts the learning of others.
- to capture video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community without their permission.
- 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 in any area of the school, including the school toilets, changing rooms, swimming pools and gyms.
- during exams and assessments.

Exceptions

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.
- should be discussed with and can be granted by the Principal, or by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#).

The three categories of exceptions allowed under the Department's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#) are:

1. Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception
For specific learning activities (class-based exception)

For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty.

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

Specific exception
Students with a health condition.
Students who are Young Carers.

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception
Travelling to and from excursions.
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 intercampus travel.

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

Camps, excursions and extracurricular activities

Southern Autistic School 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 / devices.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- Out-of-school-hours events

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and staff training.

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [DET Weapons — Banning, Searching and Seizing Harmful Items](#)
- [DET Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy](#)
- [Personal Property policy](#)
- [Anti-bullying policy](#)
- [Student Well-being and Engagement policy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2021
Approved by	Julia Sadler Assistant Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2024