

Seaford Secondary College use of mobile phones and personal devices interim policy



Created: November 2022

Review date: May, 2023

Purpose

Please note that this is an interim policy whilst the school works through a consultative process to implement the Department for Education commitment to ban mobile phones in schools in 2023. The only change made on this version from the previous ratified version is the extension of the expectations for students not accessing phones now includes break times. Please see appendix 1 for more information regarding this.

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets or laptops that are not part of a separate Bring Your Own Device arrangement. This policy applies while students are at school, or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion, during school hours.

The school's intent is to maximise class time focussed on learning.

Mobile phone use for secondary school students

Our school recognises that there are legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school. This may include:

- to ensure their safety while traveling
- so that parents can contact them outside of school hours.
- For specific classes, teachers may request students to use their phones for filming, recording or collecting data etc.
- Identified students will be permitted to have their phone in class for specific medical reasons eg diabetes, other health concerns, or as indicated on a One Plan.

Storage of personal devices

- Middle School students (7-9) are required to keep their mobile phones (or other digital device) in their **lockers or bags** during lesson time. The phones must be put on silent or turned off. Students will have their own individual combination lock.
- Senior School students (10-12) are required to keep their mobile phones (or other digital device) in their **bags** during lesson time. The phones must be put on silent or turned off.

If the student does not comply

- In line with the school's behaviour management policy, the misuse of personal devices may result in disciplinary action which includes but is not limited to Time Out for not following teacher instructions. This includes during Wellbeing and Pathways lessons, Care Group and break times.

- If confiscation is required, the student will take their device to be securely stored in the Principal's office. The device will be returned to them (or their parent) on provision of the student's Id and confirmation from a leader that the return has been approved.
- Teachers and Leaders do not touch or confiscate a student's phone. Leaders will accompany a student with the phone in their bag to the Principal's office.

Internet connection for personal devices

The BYOD policy states we do not support mobile phones. The IT team is not able to check they are using the SSC network rather than mobile data.

Roles and responsibilities

Principal

Make sure:

- this policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff and families
- there is a process for regular review of the policy
- processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.

Enforce the school's and Department for Education policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

Consider requests for exemptions from the school policy from parents, adult or independent students on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.

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.

School staff

Deliver learning opportunities, particularly the start of the year "Expectations Powerpoint" 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 behaviour support policy.

Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.

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.

Students

Comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff.

If permitted to use a mobile phone or personal device in line with 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.

Parents

Support the implementation of the school's policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy.

Use the school's **formal** communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school) ie **not contact their child via mobile** while at 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.

Communication and review

In the formation of the 2023 Seaford Secondary College Mobile Phone Policy, to ensure the school is meeting the Department for Education expectations we will follow a similar process to what was used in the creation of the previous policy. This included (but will not be limited to);

- SRC was involved in creating appropriate questions for a student survey. This was provided for all students to respond and the outcome presented to all students via the daily bulletin.
- Teachers were surveyed by the leader responsible and feedback provided to all staff on the outcome.
- Parents were consulted by a survey link sent out via SMS, Governing Council through face-to-face discussion.
- The school's policy can be accessed on the school's website under "Our school/Publications and Policies" and will be reviewed every 3 years.

Supporting information

- <https://www.seafordhs.sa.edu.au/our-school/information-technology/digital-learning-program>
- https://www.seafordhs.sa.edu.au/files/SSC_Cyber_Safety_Policy_V2.pdf
- https://www.seafordhs.sa.edu.au/files/Anti-Bullying_and_Harassment_Policy_V1_3.pdf

Appendix 1 – Exerpt from Department for Education Mobile Phone Policy

Policy updates coming from 2023

The state government has committed to banning student access to mobile phones at school across all year levels, aside from agreed positive uses.

This will ensure we 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.

Scope of policy updates

Under the incoming policy updates, all students must keep their mobile phones and other personal devices off and away at school, unless granted an exemption by their school under the department's policy. This also applies on school activities such as camps and excursions.

There will be no change to the existing provisions for schools to approve exemptions in exceptional circumstances including but not limited to:

- monitoring or managing a medical condition
- as an agreed adjustment for a student with disability or learning difficulties
- translation for students with English as an additional language or dialect
- where the student has personal circumstances requiring more ready access to their phone (such as where they are a primary carer for their own child or another family member).

Consultation and feedback on policy exemptions

The department is working with key stakeholder groups to refine the details of the policy update, including exemptions for agreed positive uses of mobile phones and other personal devices.

All staff will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy. The department will also publish further practical guidance for teachers and leaders in managing student use of personal devices at school.

Implementing the new policy in 2023

Once the new policy is finalised there will be a transition period to allow schools sufficient time to locally implement the new policy. All government schools need to be using the new policy on or before the first day of term 3, 2023.

More information will be communicated as the policy updates progress.