



Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College

College Mobile Device Policy

1.0 Introduction

This personal mobile device policy applies to all students at the College. A personal mobile device applies to all mobile devices. It most specifically refers to (but is not limited to) mobile phones. It also includes (but is not limited to) digital cameras, portable audio devices, personal tablet computers, smart watches and other similar devices. It does not refer to school approved scientific calculators.

Mobile phones owned by students at Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/guardian's) risk. No liability will be accepted by the college in the event of loss, theft or damage of the phone. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

2.0 Rationale

In recent times there has been a significant increase in the accessibility of personal mobile devices for students. The mobile phone has become one of the most influential advancements in technology over the past decade. Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College encourages the use of new and changing technologies in learning. The use of personal mobile devices to support learning is encouraged.

Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College acknowledges parents may wish their child to carry a mobile phone for personal safety reasons however, the right of a student to have access to a mobile phone at College must be balanced with the responsibility to use it appropriately.

3.0 Context

Mary MacKillop College acknowledges that the proper use of personal mobile devices can be a valuable asset to learning, support communication and socialisation, and also can also be an aid to increase student safety. As such, the College policy and procedures support the use of technology through personal mobile devices for a range of purposes and benefits.

Current research into the hazards of mobile phone devices.

Increasingly, research has asserted that there are distinct negative factors associated with the overuse of personal mobile devices in a learning environment. In particular, detrimental issues include:

- Distraction from learning
- Slowing of personal and social development
- increased incidents of students being 'triggered' by social media messages during the school day, leading to increased numbers of students presenting with anxiety.
- the use of mobile devices to incite, bully, intimidate or harass others.
- incidents of students using mobile devices to take unsolicited photos or videos leading to escalation of conflict, bullying and anxiety
- Multitasking is an illusion as our brain has to literally switch back and forth between two activities which has a cost to attention and productivity. Even brief mental blocks created by shifting between tasks such as checking a phone can impact productivity by 40%.

Research References Used:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/research/multitasking>

<https://psychopaedia.org/learning-and-development/mobile-phones-in-the-classroom-a-helpful-or-harmful-hindrance/>

https://mackillopleongatha.catholic.schooltv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-smartphones-schools

<https://www.vic.gov.au/mobile-phones-schools#research>

4.0 Scope

The Mary MacKillop Catholic Regional College Mobile Device Policy applies to all students when on school grounds or Mary MacKillop College students involved in activities organized by College staff, including camps and excursions

5.0 Procedures

5.1 Acceptable Use (Students)

- Personal mobile devices are permitted at school and may be used before the homeroom period and after the final period of academic instruction.
- During timetabled classes it is up to the discretion of the classroom teacher whether a personal mobile device can be used in class. (Academic purposes only and do not disadvantage a student who does not possess a mobile device)
- Mobile phones must be kept on silent mode and kept “**out of sight**” during classroom lessons and College activities to minimise distractions.
- Mobile phones are permitted for the purchase of food and beverages from the Canteen. (This does not include during periods of academic instruction)
- Mobile phones are permitted to be used by students with medical exemptions

5.2 Exceptions to the Policy:

- May be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met
- May be granted. See special circumstances.
- Must be documented, noting that, to avoid administrative burden on schools, this requirement can be met by including exceptions in documents that schools already regularly develop/use.

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

There are three categories of exceptions:

1. Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception	Suggested documentation
For specific learning activities (class-based exception)	Unit of work and included in the Teaching Program
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability and/or learning difficulty	Personalised Learning Plan (PLP)

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

Specific exception	Suggested documentation
Students with a health condition	Student Health Support Plan
Students who are Young Carers	School record

Special Circumstances:

If a student has special circumstances requiring the use of their mobile phone during College hours (e.g. the student has a health issue or the student is a carer) These exceptions must be requested in writing to the Deputy Principal Wellbeing. The request will be considered for approval and documented.

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

(Parents/ Guardians will be notified on permission letters if mobile phones may be used on school excursions, overnight camps or offsite activities)

Specific exception	Suggested 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

5.3 Exclusions

In the following circumstances, this does not apply:

Description	Rationale
Out-of-School-Hours Care (OSHC)	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours.
Out-of-school-hours events	Policy not applicable, as attendance falls outside of school hours.

Travelling to and from school	Policy is not applicable when travel falls outside of school hours.
Wearable devices	All notifications must be switched off.
iPads and all other personal devices	All notifications must be switched off.
Students undertaking workplace learning activities e.g. work experience	The policy is not applicable for students on work experience. Instead, students are expected to comply with a workplace's policies.
Students who are undertaking VET	The policy is not applicable for students undertaking VET offsite (as opposed to on school grounds). Instead, students are expected to comply with a TAFE or registered training organisation's policies.

5.4 Unacceptable Use - During school hours Students must not:

- Personal mobile devices are not permitted during academic classes or during breaks (e.g.: recess or lunchtime) Restricted to area (Canteen purchases).
- Students must not use their personal mobile device for social communications during the school day, unless given permission from a classroom teacher. This includes communication with parents. Students are asked to inform a teacher in the first instance if they are feeling unwell or have a concern about issues that have arisen over the course of the school day.
- In line with the rules from the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA), students must not bring personal mobile devices, during a VCE external assessment or examination. A breach of VCAA rules will result in further consequences in line with VCAA procedures (<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vce/exams/examsrules.aspx>).
- Use non-school Wi-Fi to access the mobile network. This includes the use of a smart watch, air pods or other devices with access to mobile broadband.
- Take photos, film or stream any individual or group and their activities without their knowledge or permission and the consent of the College. This includes publishing material from a mobile device to the Internet.
- Threaten, bully, intimidate or otherwise harass other people through any form of text message, photography, videography, social networking, or other data transfer system available on a personal mobile device.
- Access inappropriate or illegal materials or bring the College or any member of its community into disrepute.
- Parents and students are advised that, the College remains an appropriate point of contact to reach their child quickly. No phones are permitted to be used in the College administration area whilst waiting parent pick up.

5.5 Breaches (Students)

Improper use of personal mobile devices may result in:

1st Breach in a Semester

Confiscation of the mobile device until the end of the day. The teacher in charge will take it to reception to be stored and signed for. In this instance, it is the responsibility of the student to collect the device after school. Students will sign that they have collected the device. Should a student fail to comply the Classroom Management Procedure will apply and the student will be exited from the learning class.

2nd Breach in a Semester

Confiscation of the mobile device. The teacher in charge will take it to reception to be stored and signed for. Parents will be notified and will be required to collect the device.

3rd Breach in a Semester

Where there is ongoing improper use of the personal mobile device, or in their student agreement or positive behaviour support plan, the student will be required to hand in their personal mobile device at the beginning of the school day and then collect it from reception at the end of the school day as agreed between College Leadership and parents

If further actions are required for student compliance the College reserves the right to restrict use to ensure child safety.

Where students have bullied, threatened or harassed other students or staff via the personal mobile device, or where the personal mobile device has been used to take photographs or display inappropriate material the matter will be addressed in accordance with the Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy and the Digital Learning Policy

Misuse of mobile phones will be recorded and retained on the student's file. Students should never photograph or record any person without their express permission

Note: The Classroom Management Procedure may apply 1st, 2nd or 3rd breach if a student fails to comply with teacher directions.

5.6 Responsible Use (Parents) during school hours

Personal mobile devices must not be used to bypass College procedures in relation to school-parent contact. The College seeks the support of families in ensuring that the College is able to exercise its responsibility for the duty of care of students by ensuring that the College is made aware of any issues that may arise.

Parents who need to contact their child/ren during the school day may ring the College Office and the College will work actively to pass on the message.

Where parents are aware of a misuse of personal mobile devices that are impacting the wellbeing of students, parents are asked to open communication with the relevant College staff regarding the matter.

5.7 Implementation

This policy and procedures are implemented through a combination of:

- Staff training;
- Student ICT Agreements;
- Effective student supervision;
- Effective incident notification procedures;
- Effective communication procedures;
- Effective management of incidents of inappropriate mobile phone usage when reported and/or observed;
- Effective record keeping procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where necessary.

5.8 Discipline for Breach of Policy

Where a staff member breaches this policy Mary MacKillop College may take disciplinary action.

6.0 Related Policies

- Acceptable use of Information and Communication Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Anti-Bullying and Bullying Prevention Policy

7.0 Related Procedure

- Classroom Management Procedure

Approval

Implementation Date:

Reviewed:

Next Review Date:

This policy is endorsed by the Principal MMCRC.

May 2023

May 2023

July 2024