


St Augustine's Primary School	System Update: 05.03.2023	
Version 0.3	Date of Next Review: 05.03.2026	

# Student Mobile Phone and Portable Digital Communication Usage Policy

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School is a school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS).

## Introduction:

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies seriously.

The school acknowledges that we live in a technology-rich world where mobile phones are an important communication tool. Research has found that mobile phones and other devices can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school. The unregulated presence of mobile phones and other devices in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion.

St Augustine's Primary School has developed this policy and associated procedure to provide staff members, students, parents and carers with clear guidelines on mobile phone restrictions, exemptions and storage requirements at school.

This policy takes effect at the commencement of the 2020 school year and complies with the direction of the Victorian Minister for Education under Section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

## Scope:

This policy applies to students and student mobile phones brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

## Definitions:

**Mobile Phone:** is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. (DET 2020) Mobile Phone includes any Communication Device that has the capabilities of communicating outside of the school network. Examples include and are not limited to:

- (a) Mobile telephone or similar device;
- (b) Tablet device;
- (c) Laptop computer; and
- (d) Smart Watches.

*(Whether those devices are enabled for communication or not).*

**Policy:**

St Augustine's Primary School discourages students bringing personal mobile phones to school. It does; however, acknowledge that some students may bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school.

Mobile phones are not permitted for use at St Augustine's Primary School during school hours:

» Students who bring a personal mobile phone to school must switch them off and securely store them in their school bag. » Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see exemptions)

» When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

**Implementation:****Personal Mobile Phone Usage:**

In accordance with the Victorian Department of Education & Training's Mobile Phones Policy issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at St Augustine's Primary 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 for the purpose for which the exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

**Secure Storage:**

Personal mobile phones owned by students at St Augustine's Primary 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. (I.e they are travelling independently to and from school or an exemption has been granted).

Students who bring a personal mobile phone to school must switch them off and securely store them in their school bag.

Students, parents & carers must note that St Augustine's Primary School does not maintain accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft. Students and their parents or carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items.

**Enforcement:**

Students who fail to secure their personal mobile phone as outlined in the school's Mobile Phone Usage Policy:

*First Offence:*

» Will have their device confiscated and returned to them at the end of the school day. » The student will receive a verbal warning and be reminded of their responsibility to secure their personal mobile phone in accordance with this policy.

*Second Offence:*

» Will have their device confiscated and returned to them at the end of the school day. » Contact will be made with the student's parents or carers reminding them of their child's responsibility to secure their personal mobile phone in accordance with this policy.

» Parents and Carer's will also be informed that their child's failure to comply with the school's Mobile Usage Policy and the Victorian Department of Education & Training's Mobile Phones Policy may result in disciplinary action.

*Third Offence:*

» Immediate contact will be made with the student's parents & carers requesting them to attend school to collect their child.

» Will have their device confiscated and only returned to their parents or carers upon their arrival at the school to collect their child.

» A meeting will be scheduled with the parents, carers and their child to discuss disciplinary action which, at the discretion of the Principal or their nominee may include suspension.

**Refusal to Comply:**

Where a student refuses to comply with the school's Mobile Phone Usage Policy or hand over their personal mobile phone, immediate contact will be made with the student's parents & carers requesting them to attend school to collect their child.

A meeting will be scheduled with the parents, carers and their child, to discuss disciplinary action consistent with our school's existing student wellbeing policies

**Inappropriate Use of Mobile Phones:**

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at St Augustine's Primary School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing student wellbeing policies

The inappropriate use of personal mobile phones is any use of the device during school hours, unless an exception has been granted. The inappropriate use of a personal mobile phone also includes:

» The use in any way that disrupts the learning of others;

- » Sending inappropriate, harassing or threatening messages or phone calls;
- » Engaging in inappropriate social media use including cyber bullying;
  
- » Capturing video, images or voice recordings, of people, including students, staff members and other members of the school community without their permission;
- » Capturing video, images or voice recordings in the school toilets.
- » Use during testing and assessment.

### **Exemptions:**

Exemptions to this policy may be applied during school hours where certain conditions are met. There are three categories for exemption:

- » Learning related exemptions;
- » Health and wellbeing-related exceptions;

Exemptions may only be granted by the principal, or their nominee upon a formal request from a student's parent or carer. All exemptions must be documented noting that, to avoid administrative burden on the school, this requirement can be met by including exceptions in documents that the school regularly uses.

#### 1. Learning Related Exemption

#### ***Specific Exemption Documentation***

For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty. (Visual or hearing impairment) Individual Learning Plan, Individual Education Plan For specific learning activities (class-based exception) Unit of work, learning sequence

#### 2. Health and Wellbeing Related Exemption

#### ***Specific Exemption Documentation***

Students with a health condition Student Health Support Plan  
 Students who are Young Carers A localised student record

### **Exclusions:**

This Policy does not apply to:

- » Out-of-School-Hours Care
- » Out-of-school-hours events
- » Travelling to and from school

### **References:**

*Victorian Government, Department of Education & Training – Student Use of Mobile Phones 2020,*  
*Victorian Government, Education & Training Reform Act - Section 5.2.1(2)(b) 2006.*

### **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the School Improvement Plan