

Students Using Mobile Phones Policy

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Baringa School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones during school hours based on section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

RATIONALE

The Victorian government and Baringa School takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student safety and wellbeing, and the development of social skills and positive behaviour, very seriously.

Whilst the Victorian government 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 physical activity are also valued, rather than students being focused on a mobile phone, 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. 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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Baringa School and,
2. And includes Students' personal mobile phones brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

DEFINITIONS

A mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

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

At Baringa School:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored in a storage area identified by their pastoral teacher, during school hours.
- If a student refuses to have their mobile phone placed into a secure storage area their parents or guardians can be called to come and collect them.
- 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 Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Barings 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

Mobile phones owned by students at Baringa 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 Baringa 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 Department's [Personal Goods policy](#).

Where students bring a mobile phone to school Baringa School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so.

Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Baringa School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing Student [Engagement and Wellbeing Policy](#).

If a student is identified as having brought a mobile phone to Baringa they are to be given the opportunity to hand in their phone to their pastoral teacher, a member of Baringa's behavioural support team or another trusted educational support staff member. The phone must then be placed in secure storage. If a student refuses to hand in their phone their parent or guardian are to be contacted and the situation explained to them. If the student continues to refuse to hand in their phone their parent or guardian can be asked to collect them at the earliest opportunity.

At Baringa 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:

- in any way that disrupts the learning of self and 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
- 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.
- can be granted by the principal, or by the teacher for that class, in accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#).

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

Baringa 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.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-school-hours events
- Travelling to and from school
- Laptop devices
- Students undertaking work experience
- Students who are undertaking external VET

RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- **Education and Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)**
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/legislation/Pages/act2006.aspx>



- **Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)** <https://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/the-law/equal-opportunity-act>
- **Reporting and Managing Emergencies and Incidents**
- **Mobile Phones – Department Policy**
- **Personal Goods – Department policy**

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated August 2021 and is scheduled for review on November 2022.