



PATTERSON RIVER
SECONDARY COLLEGE

MOBILE PHONES – STUDENT USE POLICY

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Patterson River Secondary College's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices during school hours.

DEFINITIONS

A mobile phone is a telephone with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. For the purpose of this policy, "mobile phone" refers to mobile phones and any device that may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone such as smart watches, i-pods, Tablets, gaming and wearable devices.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Patterson River Secondary College and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

POLICY

Patterson River Secondary College understands that students may choose to bring a personal mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school.

At Patterson River Secondary College:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours 8:45 am – 3:00 pm
- 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 General office.

Patterson River Secondary College acknowledge that excessive use of mobile phones (and similar devices) can have a negative impact on the mental and social health and wellbeing of young people. Additionally, we believe that mobile phone use has a detrimental effect on student learning and educational outcomes.

Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones – Student Use Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal mobile phones must not be used at Patterson River Secondary College during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless an exception has been granted.

Application for exemption to the policy must be made in writing with supporting medical documentation. In the instance 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 Patterson River Secondary College 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 Patterson River Secondary College 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.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Patterson River Secondary College will provide secure storage. **Secure storage** is storage that cannot be readily accessed by others without permission to do so. At Patterson River Secondary College every student is assigned a locker and are required to store their phones in their locker with a lock.

Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Patterson River Secondary College may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing student engagement policies and behavioural guidelines.

At Patterson River Secondary College, inappropriate use of mobile phones is defined as:

- 'any use of a mobile phone, or similar device, during school hours', unless an exception has been granted.
- mobile phone use that has the potential to significantly impact on the health, safety and/or wellbeing of members of our school community

This includes mobile phone use:

- that in any way disrupts the learning of 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

Consequences

For inappropriate use during school hours

- confiscation from student and securely stored at the front office awaiting parent collection

For inappropriate use that negatively impacts on the health safety and wellbeing

- may include a range of consequences consistent with our school's existing student engagement policies and behavioural guidelines.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the policy can be granted by the principal team and may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically,

- Learning related exceptions
- Health and wellbeing-related exceptions; and
- Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite.

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

1. Learning-related exceptions

Specific exception	Documentation
For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty	Individual Learning Plan with supporting documentation

2. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions

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

3. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

Specific exception	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

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

Patterson River Secondary College 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
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities offsite, e.g. work experience
- Students who are travelling to their VET course location

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
- Included in school newsletter
- Included in staff handbook
- Discussed at annual staff briefings/meetings
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#)
- [Weapons — Banning, Searching and Seizing Harmful Items](#)
- [Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy](#)

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	16 September, 2024
Consultation	School council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	September, 2027