

MHS Procedure: Student use of mobile phones and devices

Our procedure at Murray High School is based on the DoE policy for [student use of mobile phones in schools](#) and is informed by prior consultation across the school community.

The school's existing procedures for mobile phone use recognise that students' mobile phones can be:

- an effective learning device under controlled circumstances;
- a convenient communication device between the student and home when traveling to and from school;
- a health monitoring instrument in some circumstances;
- a source of engagement where appropriate; and
- a means by which appropriate communication and phone use can be modelled, taught and encouraged.

For these reasons, there has not been a blanket ban on student mobile phone use in our school and we do not envisage that the expectations of the Department's policy will make any significant changes to our current expectations. Instead, we believe that the new policy will enhance and support our expectations for mobile phone use and will help to increase the learning and engagement benefits for all students.

The procedure for student use of mobile phones will be as set out below.

Students may bring their mobile phones to school, but when arriving at the school gate mobile phones are to be turned off and placed in their bag for the duration of the day. Please note that placement in a pocket does not constitute placing the phone in their school bag. A mobile phone in a pocket, will remain a distraction to the learning and engagement of the student involved. The school cannot take responsibility for damage or loss of mobile phones or any other unauthorised items at school. Family members who need to communicate with a student throughout the day, are asked to do so by phoning School Reception on (02) 60254711.

As well as mobile phones, compliance with this procedure and Department of Education policy applies to all electronic devices such as smart watches, air pods, tablets, laptop computers and any device capable of real-time communication. In the specific points below, the term “phone” applies to all such devices.

Specific expectations and conditions

- When students arrive at school, phones are to be switched off and placed in their bag upon entry at the school gate.
- No student is permitted to make or receive phone calls during the school day. This includes when feeling unwell, under which circumstances teachers will send the student to sickbay and the office staff will contact the appropriate family member.
- Earphones and ear pods must not be used at any time.
- It is recognised that under certain circumstances there is an educational benefit to using a mobile phone during a specific guided lesson. When this is the case the teacher, with the prior approval of the head teacher, will allow the use of the phone only for the duration of that particular lesson.
- No charging of phones is permitted on school grounds.
- Use of devices during exams or formal assessment tasks will be considered malpractice and will be managed as such.
- Devices may NOT be used in the playground during recess and lunch time unless a phone pass has been issued. The conditions of the phone pass (either verbal or in writing by school staff) must be followed.
- Music devices/speakers are not to be used at school or on excursions.
- During PE and Sport classes, students’ bags will be locked in the changerooms or classrooms for safe storage. All students are expected to cooperate with particular instructions in relation to this.
- Students may not access their phones until exiting the school grounds at the end of the school day or when signed out without returning later. Phones may only be retrieved from school bags upon exiting the school gate.
- Phones and card apps cannot be used for canteen purchases. The canteen accepts both cash and card only.
- Any essential communication between home and the student during school hours must be directed through the Reception Office. This includes family members making calls to students and students making essential calls to family members.

What to expect when the above conditions are not followed:

- If a student has a device out in class or in the playground, the student will be sent to the Reception Office to hand in their mobile phone or device.
- A receipt will be issued, which needs to be presented to the teacher as proof that the device/s have been handed in.
- If a student does not hand over their device when requested, a family member will be contacted and requested to collect the device from school.
- A student record will be kept on the Sentral database for each time a device is confiscated. This will be managed as a matter of student conduct.
- The first time a device is confiscated (irrespective of whether it is a phone, watch, air pods etc), the student may collect it from the Reception Office after 3:25
- The second time the phone is confiscated, a family member may collect it from the Reception Office at any time up to 3.30pm. Later collection will depend on the unpredictable availability of administration or executive staff. Families will be notified of phone collection via SMS and/or email via the SchoolBytes platform, in the same way as a case of student absence.
- The third time the phone is confiscated a suspension caution will be issued for repeated infringements of these procedures. NB: Under some circumstances, this may resemble a pattern of behaviour when connected to any other conduct matters. Under such circumstances, the significance of any policy infringement – repeated or otherwise – may be escalated.
- Repeated infringements, as with the above point, will be managed as a conduct issue and may result in disciplinary actions including suspension.