



DEVELOPING AN ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY FOR MOBILE PHONES IN YOUR SCHOOL

This template may be used as a starting point in developing an Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones in your school. You should add, delete, or modify items to reflect the specific needs and standards of your school and community. Completed Acceptable Use Policies should be signed by students and their parents or guardians to signify that they have read and accepted the conditions for taking a mobile phone to school and it should be kept on file at your school.

This template is based on the principles of mutual responsibility and respect of all parties involved in the use of mobile phones. It requires accountability on the part of the user for his or her actions. It is designed to assist in managing the safe and responsible use of mobile phones by students and involves parents as partners in assisting their children in the proper use of mobile phones. It is underpinned by an overall requirement for students to exercise care and use their mobile phones in a considerate manner and to be aware of situations in which others could be affected by their actions. It makes clear that the privilege to take a mobile phone to school may be withdrawn if a student fails in his or her duty to behave responsibly and in accordance with the school's requirements.

Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, and parents take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2 [School] has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students and parents guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.
- 1.3 Students, their parents or guardians must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.
- 1.4 The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.

2. Rationale

2.1 Personal safety and security

[School] accepts that parents give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2 The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or guardians.
- 3.3 Parents should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.
- 3.4 Permission to have a mobile phone at school while under the school's supervision is contingent on parent/guardian permission in the form of a signed copy of this policy. Parents/guardians may revoke approval at any time.

4. Acceptable Uses

- 4.1 Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/guardian specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to [insert name of appropriate teacher]. Parents are reminded that in cases of emergency, the [school office/other point of contact] remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- 4.2 While on school premises, students should use soundless features such as text messaging, answering services, call diversion and vibration alert to receive important calls.
- 4.3 Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school.
- 4.4 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- 5.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies. Students should only use their mobile phones before or after school or during recess and lunch breaks.
- 5.2 Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ringtones or beeping.
- 5.3 Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour.

- 5.4 It is forbidden for students to “gang up” on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 5.5 Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 5.6 Should there be repeated disruptions to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Principal or student council.

6. Theft or damage

- 6.1 Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- 6.2 Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not ‘advertise’ they have them.
- 6.3 Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.
- 6.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- 6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.
- 6.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (eg by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.
- 6.7 Lost and stolen mobile phones in Australia can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Inappropriate conduct

- 7.1 Any student/s caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal or student council.
- 7.2 Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal or student council.
- 7.3 Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal or student council.

[It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Principal or student council is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.]

8. Sanctions

- 8.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers. The mobile phone would be taken to a secure place within the school and the student's parent informed. Appropriate arrangements would then be made for the parents to collect the mobile phone.
- 8.2 Repeated infringements may result in the withdrawal of the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile telephone to school.
- 8.3 As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or guardian would be notified immediately.

Effective: (Date)

Parent/Guardian Permission

I have read and understand the above information about appropriate use of mobile phones at [school] and I understand that this form will be kept on file at the school and that the details may be used (and shared with a third party, if necessary) to assist identify a phone should the need arise (eg if lost, or if the phone is being used inappropriately).

I give my child permission to carry a mobile phone to school and understand that my child will be responsible for ensuring that the mobile phone is used appropriately and correctly while under the school's supervision, as outlined in this document.

Parent name (print) _____

Parent signature _____

Date _____

Student name (print) _____

Mobile phone number _____

Student signature _____

Date _____

Teacher name (print) _____

Teacher signature _____

Date _____

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact [School representative contact information].
