



GEELONG HIGH SCHOOL

Student Use of Mobile Phones Policy

PURPOSE & RATIONALE

To explain to our school community the Department's and Geelong High School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile and cellular devices during school hours.

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 a student's own learning and the capacity of other students 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. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission (an exception) to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose. For a small number of students with particular health and wellbeing needs, an exemption to the policy may also be granted. (Ref. DET website Mobile phones in schools)

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Geelong High School and,
2. Students' personal mobile phones and other personal mobile and cellular devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.
3. Student misuse of a BYOD that has a capacity to access the internet.

DEFINITIONS

Mobile Phone: For the purpose of this policy, "mobile phone" refers to mobile phones and any cellular device that has a similar functionality to a mobile phone such as smartwatches and a student's BYOD, with access to a cellular (telecommunications) system, with or without a physical connection to a network. Mobile Phones fit within the DET *Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items* policy under "Other items" as an item that can be used to disrupt classes, distract students or cause harm to another student(s).

A school day: Is defined as from the time the student arrives at school until the time they leave school for the day.

POLICY

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

At Geelong High School:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during the school day. Lockable lockers are provided for this purpose
- Included in this policy are headphones which should also be switched off and securely stored during the school day
- Exemptions and 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 Administration Office on 5225 4100**
- If a student needs to use a phone during the school day they may do so via the school Administration Office, House Office or an assistant principal

Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's [Mobile Phones Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, personal **mobile phones and headphones must not be used at Geelong High School during the school day, including lunchtime and recess**, unless an exemption or exception has been granted.

Students are not allowed to use the mobile phones once they arrive at school and enter the school boundaries, and then cannot use them again until 3.10 at the end of the school day. For the purposes of this policy, the school boundary is defined as the front of the school buildings facing Ryrie street and the fence line to the rear of the school.

Where a student has been granted an exemption or exception for a mobile phone or headphones, the student must use it mobile phone for the purpose for which the exemption or exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner.

The inappropriate use of mobile phones is **any use during the school day** unless an exemption or exception has been granted.

Explicitly, this is the use of a mobile phone:

- in any way that disrupts the learning of themselves and others
- to send inappropriate, harassing or threatening messages or phone calls
- to engage in inappropriate social media use including cyberbullying
- to capture and/or share video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community without their permission.
- to capture and/or share video or images in the school toilets, changing rooms, swimming pools, or gyms
- during exams and assessments

Implementation

At Geelong High School we anticipate that our students will conduct themselves in accordance with our expectations for the use of mobile phones. However, on the occasion that students breach the mobile phone policy, consequences will apply consistent with our school's existing *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

Lack of awareness of the Geelong High School *Student Use of Mobile Phone* policy will not be an acceptable excuse.

First breach – A non-exempt student is in possession of or seen using a mobile phone or headphones:

1. The teacher will instruct the student to hand over the phone or headphones. A student with an exemption will have a *Mobile Phone Permission Card* and must only use the phone for the explicitly exempt purpose.
2. The teacher will note the student's name and take the phone to the Administration Office (labelled with student name & HG & condition of phone) and will log the event on Compass (visible to parent). The phone will then be stored in a secure locker. A log of the incident will be completed.
3. A phone call and/or email to the Parent/Carer will be made by the Administration Office. A text message may also be sent.
4. **It is the responsibility of the parent/carers to collect the phone.**

Refusal – A student who refuses to follow a teacher’s instruction (to hand over the phone or headphones) will be warned that they risk more serious sanctions.

If the student continues to refuse:

- The teacher will send for a member of the House Office or a Principal Class Officer (PCO) to come and collect the phone or headphones.
- The House Office or PCO will make the chronicle entry on Compass.
- A further sanction will be applied for refusing to follow a teacher’s instruction and Ministerial policy
- This will be a detention or suspension consistent with the school’s *Student Engagement and Wellbeing* policy and *Bullying Prevention* policy.

Second breach –A parent/carer will be required to collect the phone or headphones. An after-school detention will be allocated.

Third and subsequent breach –A parent/carer will be required to collect the phone or headphone. A further sanction(s) will be applied- either a detention(s) and/or suspension

Exemptions and exceptions

- Exemptions for individual students can only be granted by the principal, assistant principals or house leaders.
- Teachers who require an exception for their class must seek prior permission through a PCO for that class, in accordance with the Department’s Mobile Phones Policy.
- A record of students and classes that have been granted an exception will be kept with the PCOs and House Teams. The Daily Organiser will also have the relevant documentation to alert CRTs (see below for list of exceptions and exemptions)

The three categories of exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Department’s Mobile Phones Policy are:

- *Learning related exceptions*- For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty (Personal Learning Plan)
- *Health & wellbeing related exemptions* - Students with a health condition (Student Health Support Plan required) and/or students who are young carers (A localised student record)
- *When managing risk when students are off-site* – (see camps, excursions, extracurricular activities below)

Camps, excursions and extracurricular activities

- Students travelling to and from excursions; students on excursions and camps (Risk assessment planning will designate whether an exception is required – year 7 camp for example will be no Mobile Phones); when students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission – e.g. VET
- Geelong High 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.
- Teachers will have a mobile phone that students may be allowed to use in an emergency situation.

Where an exemption or exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone or headphones for the purpose for which it was granted. Misuse of a mobile phone or headphones under these circumstances will result in behavioural consequences and possibly loss of the exemption.

Secure storage

Mobile phones and headphones owned by students at Geelong High School are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner’s (student’s or parent/carer’s) risk (ref. Personal Property Policy). Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Please note that Geelong High 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 Geelong High School’s Personal Property Policy AND/OR the Department’s Personal Goods policy.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Geelong High School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Geelong High School students are required to store their phones in their lockers, secured by a suitable combination lock.

It is each student's responsibility to maintain the security of their locker.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to

- Out-of-school-hours events
- Independent travel to and from school

RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- [Mobile Phones – Department Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement](#)
- Bullying prevention
- [Ban, Search and Seize Harmful Items](#)
- [Personal Goods – Department policy](#)

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated in and ratified by School Council September 2022 and is scheduled for review in September 2024