

# MOBILE PHONES – STUDENT USE



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Gembrook Primary School.

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## PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the Department of Education's and Gembrook Primary School's policy requirements and expectations relating to students using mobile phones and other personal mobile devices and wearables during school hours.

Whilst the school acknowledges that mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal mobile devices may provide increased security for students whilst travelling to and from school, there is no need for students to have access to these devices during the school day. Mobile phones can be used inappropriately, lost or damaged and must therefore be effectively managed.

Gembrook Primary School will ensure that the use of mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal digital devices do not impact on the education program and that the use of all devices respects the privacy of others.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Gembrook Primary School.
2. Students' personal mobile phones, smartwatches and other personal mobile devices brought onto school premises during school hours.
3. Students travelling to and from school on the school bus.
4. Students attending after hours school events (i.e. school disco, school camps).

## DEFINITIONS

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

**A smartwatch** is a watch with access to a cellular (telecommunication) system, with or without a physical connection to a network.

## POLICY

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

At Gembrook Primary School:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones or smartwatches to school must have them switched off and securely stored at the school office during school hours.

- 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 of Education's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#) issued by the Minister for Education, student personal mobile phones and smartwatches must not be used at Gembrook Primary School, from the time of arrival until the time of departure from the school grounds, unless an exception has been granted.

Where a student has been granted an exception, they 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 and personal devices owned by students at Gembrook Primary 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 or smartwatch to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Please note that Gembrook Primary School does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage, loss or theft. Students and their parents/carers are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items.

Where students bring a mobile phone or smartwatch to school, Gembrook Primary School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Gembrook Primary School students are required to store their mobile phones and smartwatches at the school office, in a labelled pouch which is placed in a lockable cabinet.

## Enforcement

Students who use their personal mobile phones or smartwatches inappropriately at Gembrook Primary School may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's existing *Student Wellbeing and Engagement* and *Bullying Prevention* policies.

At Gembrook Primary School inappropriate use of mobile phones and smartwatches is:

- **Any use during school hours**, unless an exception has been granted.
- In any way that 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 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 and gyms.

## Exceptions

Exceptions to the policy:

- May be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically,
  - Health and wellbeing-related exceptions.

- Can be granted by the Principal, in accordance with the Department of Education's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#).

The exceptions allowed under the Department of Education's [Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy](#) is:

#### **1. 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

Where an exception is granted, the student can only use the mobile phone or smartwatch for the purpose for which it was granted.

#### **Camps, excursions and extracurricular activities**

Gembrook Primary 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, smartwatches and devices.

### **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Included in staff induction processes.
- Discussed at staff briefings or meetings, as required.
- Included in our staff handbook.
- Included as a reference in our school newsletter.
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request.

### **RELATED POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement and Bullying Prevention  
<https://www.gembrookps.vic.edu.au/wp/index.php/policies/>
- Department of Education Policies:
  - [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	May 2023
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	May 2027