Mobile Phone Student Use Policy

1. **PURPOSE**

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

2. **DEFINITIONS**

- Mobile Phone – a portable device for connecting to a telecommunications network in order use voice, video, social media and other Internet based applications. For this policy, "mobile phone" refers to mobile phones and any personal electronic device that may connect to or have a similar functionality to a mobile phone such as a smart watch.

3. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- All students at Mount Alexander College and,
- Students' personal mobile phones and other personal electronic devices brought onto school premises during school hours, including recess and lunchtime.

4. **POLICY**

The school understands that students may bring a mobile phone to school, particularly if they are travelling independently to and from school. At Mount Alexander College:

- Students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored during school hours.
- Exceptions to this policy may be applied if certain conditions are met (see below for further information).
- When emergencies occur, Parents/Carers/Guardians should contact their child by calling the school's general office.

Personal mobile phone use

In accordance with the Department's Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy issued by the Minister for Education, mobile phones must not be used at the school during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless an exception has been granted. 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 the school are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/carer/guardian's risk. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Note that the school does not have accident insurance for accidental property damage or theft. Students and their parent/carer/guardian are encouraged to obtain appropriate insurance for valuable items. Refer to the Department's Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy for more information.
- Where students bring a mobile phone to school, they must store them in their assigned locker which must be secured with a School approved combination lock. Students are required to keep their mobile phone in their lockers throughout the school day. Lockers cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. Students who do not have an approved combination lock must not store their phones in their lockers; instead, they must hand their phones into the Heads of House to be locked away.

Enforcement
Students who use their personal mobile phones inappropriately at Mount Alexander College may be issued with consequences consistent with the School's Student Wellbeing and Engagement, Code of Conduct and Bullying Prevention policies.

At Mount Alexander College inappropriate use of mobile phones is any use during school hours, unless an exception has been granted, and particularly use of a mobile phone to:

- Disrupt the learning of others.
- Send inappropriate, harassing, or threatening messages or phone calls.
- Engage in inappropriate social media use including cyber bullying.
- Capture video or images of people, including students, teachers, and members of the school community without their permission.
- Capture video or images in the school toilets, changing rooms, swimming pools and gyms.
- Assist during exams and assessments.

In the case where a student does not comply with the policy the following steps will be enacted:

Phone use in class time:

- Any student who has a phone in class will be asked to hand their phone to the staff member who will make a Compass Chronicle Entry under the 'Mobile Phone' tab. The teacher will take the phone to Heads of House. The phone will remain in the Heads of House for the reminder of the day. Students will be able to collect the phone at 3.40pm from the Heads of House office.

b. Phone use outside of class time:

- Any student who has a phone in the yard at any time will have the phone confiscated by a member of staff. The phone will be placed in the Heads of House office and will be able to be collected at the end of the day at 3.40pm.
- If it is the second time a student has had a phone in class or in the yard, a parent, carer or guardian will be contacted and asked to collect the phone from the school.
- After the third time, students will be required to attend a meeting with their parents and will be required to leave their phone at the Heads of House office each day for a week.

If a student continually fails to comply with the policy a parent, career guardian meeting will be organised, and students may be restricted from access to their mobile phone at school going forward.

Exceptions
Exceptions to the policy may be applied during school hours if certain conditions are met, specifically,

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

Exceptions can be granted by the principal, or by the teacher for that class in the case of an offsite event / excursions, in accordance with the Department's Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy. The three categories of exceptions allowed under the Department's Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy are:

a. Learning-related exceptions
- For specific learning activities (class-based exception)
- For students for whom a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed because of a disability or learning difficulty

b. Health and wellbeing-related exceptions
- Students with a health condition
- Students who are Young Carers

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c. Exceptions related to managing risk when students are offsite

- Travelling to and from excursions
- Students on excursions and camps
- When students are offsite (not on school grounds) and unsupervised with parental permission
- Students with a dual enrolment or who need to undertake intercampus travel

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

Camps, excursions, and extracurricular activities

The School will provide students and their parents, carers and guardians 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.
- Tablets, iPads and all other electronic devices required as part of the school curriculum.
- Students undertaking workplace learning activities, e.g. work experience.
- Students who are undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET).

5. FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Camps and Excursions Policy
- Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Child Safety code of Conduct Policy
- DET Mobile Phones — Student Use Policy
  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/students-using-mobile-phones/policy
- DET Claims for Property Damage and Medical Expenses policy

  https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/claims-property-damage-and-medical-expenses/policy