

Molong Central School

Students' Use of Mobile Phones in Schools

Implementation Date 9/10/2023

New South Wales Department of Education: Students Use of Mobile Phones in Schools Policy.

Direction and guidance on the safe and responsible use of Mobile Phones in NSW Public Schools.

1. Policy Statement:

- 1.1 Students are not allowed to use mobile phones at school, including during recess and lunch.
- 1.2 Principals will manage individual requests from parents and/or carers, and students, for any exemptions to the policy.
- 1.3 Principals may allow students to use mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as for an educational purpose, to achieve student health and wellbeing outcomes, or as part of a reasonable adjustment to enable students with specific needs to participate in education on the same basis as other students.

2. Context:

- 2.1 Learning environments should support students to develop technological, social, and emotional competencies. This support should maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of digital environments and prepare students for life beyond school.

Students' Use of Mobile Phones at Molong Central School

Rationale and Objectives:

Molong Central School (MCS) supports the restrictions of mobile phones in accordance with the NSW Department of Education (NSWDoE): Students' Use of Mobile Phones in Schools policy.

Mobile phone use in schools can impact student learning and wellbeing. Restricting mobile phone use at school aims to increase focus in classrooms, remove distractions and promote positive social interactions while reducing the potential for online bullying.

MCS has strong teaching and learning practices to support students in the classroom using various forms of appropriate technology, which maximises the benefits and minimises the risks of digital environments and prepares students for life beyond school. We foster a safe learning environment that supports and enhances each child's social and emotional health through our wellbeing and learning support teams.

MCS has elected to use the following approach to implement this mandate.

- All mobile phones are required to be turned off and placed in a locked mobile phone pouch for the full school day, including at recess and lunch.

This will mean that students will have a responsibility to turn off their phone, place it in the pouch, lock the pouch and store it safely. This is an approved NSWDoE option and will limit unnecessary distractions and complement our ongoing approach to ensure every student maximises their learning and social growth in a safe and supportive environment.

Exemptions:

Students with special needs, including medical and learning needs, may apply for an exemption. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for a medical exemption will need to provide a written request, supported with medical documentation (e.g. letters of recommendation from a pediatrician, psychologist, etc.), to the principal at molong-c.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Exemptions will only be granted to students with significant health and wellbeing needs.

Contacting Students:

MCS understands there will always be emergencies when parents/carers need to get in contact with students or vice versa during the school day. We try to keep this to a minimum, apart from emergencies, to avoid disturbing the students' learning.

Parents/carers can contact the school through the school office at **(02) 6366 8224** and students will also be able to contact parents/carers through the school office or the Deputy Principal if urgent.

In Summary:

- The new mobile devices management plan at MCS will apply to mobile phones and will occur during all school hours, including break times such as recess and lunch. Students will still be able to carry their phones while travelling to and from school.
- Access to mobile phones during excursions/sport will be dealt with on a case-by-case scenario. In most cases phones will be locked in the pouch during the excursion.
- Students will be responsible for locking their Mobile Phones in their Mobile Phone Locker Pouches each morning when they arrive on the school grounds.
- At the commencement of Period 1, all students will place their locked Mobile Phone Locker Pouch containing their Mobile Phones on their desks where the teachers will inspect that they are locked.
- School staff can allow students to use their mobile phones in specific circumstances, such as for an educational purpose, for their wellbeing or to support students with specific needs.
- All students will receive a free Mobile Phone Locker Pouch that is their responsibility to manage. Should a student misplace, damage, or lose the pouch they will be responsible for the replacement cost of \$20.
- If a student forgets to bring their pouch to school, they must lock their mobile phone in the schools phone lockers in the Deputy office for the day.
- Any student who brings a mobile phone to school will be responsible for ensuring the above conditions and courtesies are observed.
- As with all valuable items, students are strongly discouraged from bringing mobile phones to school due to the potential for loss, theft, or damage of the item.
- MCS cannot accept responsibility for the loss, theft, or damage to such items. These items are brought to school at your own risk.

Students Must:

- Turn off and lock phones in their Mobile Phone Locker Pouches when they arrive on school grounds.
- When granted permission to use their mobile phone, ensure they are always used appropriately.
- Unlock their Mobile Phone Locker Pouch at the conclusion of the school day.

Staff Will:

- Inspect Mobile Phone Locker Pouches at the commencement of Period 1.
- Ensure the Students' Use of Mobile Phone Policy is followed closely during the school day.
- Follow the MCS: Failure to Adhere to the Students' Use of Mobile Phone Policy and consistently implement the Hierarchy of Consequences.

MCS: FAILURE TO ADHERE TO THE STUDENTS' USE OF MOBILE PHONE POLICY

	HIERARCHY OF CONSEQUENCES
1st Offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student's mobile phone is confiscated and locked in the school safe. - The student's first Mobile Phone Breach is recorded on SENTRAL. - The student's Parent/Carer is contacted and informed of the breach (HT/DP). - The Parent/Carer will need to arrange a time with the supervising Deputy Principal to collect their child's phone from the school safe.
2nd Offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student's mobile phone is confiscated and locked in the school safe. - The student's second Mobile Phone Breach is recorded on SENTRAL. - The student's Parent/Carer is contacted and informed of the breach (DP). - The Parent/Carer will need to arrange a time with the supervising Deputy Principal to collect their child's phone from the school safe. - The student is issued with a Formal Caution of Suspension. - The student will need to present to the office and have their phone locked in the school safe for the duration of the school day for the next two days.
3rd Offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The student's mobile phone is confiscated and locked in the school safe. - The student's third Mobile Phone Breach is recorded on SENTRAL. - The student's Parent/Carer is contacted and informed of the breach. - The student will be suspended for two days. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With consultation, the Parent/Carer may choose to have their child's phone suspended and locked in the school safe for two school days (including overnight) in-lieu of a two-day suspension – phone is then returned at the end of the second day.
4th Offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - After the third offense, every further breach of the Students' Use of Mobile Phones policy will result in suspension. - The length of each suspension will continue to escalate.

Please Note:

- A Head Teacher or Deputy Principal will be called to support teachers if any student refuses to adhere to this policy.
- Failure to comply with any of these actions could result in an immediate formal caution/suspension.
- This process will refresh each calendar year.

PHONE LOCKER POUCH IMPLEMENTATION: FAQ's PARENTS/CARERS

What if a student does not comply with the mobile phone plan and accesses it at during the school day?	As with all school rules, student refusal will result in appropriate action being taken, possibly leading to suspension.
What if a student needs to make an urgent phone call home?	Students will be allowed to call home via the front office or via the Deputy Principal.
What if a student with a medical condition requires their phone to record medical information?	If your child has special medical requirements, you may apply for an exemption through the Principal.
How do I arrange permission for my child to use their phone for medical reasons?	You will be able to make a request for an exemption. If appropriate, an individualised plan for usage will be developed. It will consider their medical needs and set the terms and conditions for phone use, that incorporate school guidelines.
What happens with mobile phones on excursions/sporting events?	Exemptions may be made for excursions/sporting events on a case-by-case scenario. In most cases phones will be locked in the pouch during the excursion.
How will the school manage the administration of parent enquiries?	Schools will connect with parents in the usual ways and can be contacted anytime via the front office.
What if my child needs to purchase food at the canteen?	Students are encouraged to bring their physical Debit Cards to school with them to enable cashless transactions. It will not be possible to use the phone.
What if my child needs to use their phone for classwork?	There may be situations where students may be required to use their phones in class as part of the lesson. In these situations, the staff member will need to monitor the use of the phones by the students, to ensure that they are used for the designated purpose, and once the lesson/activity is completed, ensure that students comply with managing their phones in line with the school management strategy.
Will the school send a message to my child if I need to contact them?	Messages from parents to students will be passed on as usual.
What if my child chooses to leave their phone at home?	There is no requirement to bring a mobile phone or related accessories to school.
What happens if my child loses or damages their pouch?	The school will fund and provide all students with their first mobile phone pouch. If a pouch is lost or damaged, parents/carers and students will be responsible for purchasing a new pouch from the school office for \$20.
What happens if my child forgets to bring their mobile phone pouch to school?	The student will need to present to the office and have their phone locked in the school safe for the duration of the school day.

PHONE LOCKER POUCH IMPLEMENTATION: FAQ's STUDENTS

<p>What if I don't possess a mobile phone or have not brought it to school that day?</p>	<p>There is no requirement to bring a mobile phone to school.</p>
<p>Can I use my phone before and after the school day?</p>	<p>As soon as you arrive at school, all mobile phones should be switched off and locked in your personal mobile phone locker pouch. Mobile phones cannot be accessed until you leave the school grounds at the end of the day.</p>
<p>What if I need to contact my parent/carer during the school day?</p>	<p>Students will be allowed to call home via the front office or via their supervising Deputy Principal.</p>
<p>What if my parent/carer needs to contact me in the event of an emergency?</p>	<p>In the case of an emergency, your parent/carer can contact the school via the front office.</p>
<p>What if I have a medical condition that requires me to use my phone to record or monitor medical information?</p>	<p>If you require the use of a mobile phone for medical or other reasons, you will be granted an exemption and the details of any exemption will be added to your learning support, individual education plan, or flagged on SENTRAL.</p> <p>You will be made aware of this exemption.</p>
<p>I use my phone to purchase food from the canteen or buy uniform items.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to bring their physical Debit Cards to school with them to enable cashless transactions. It will not be possible to use the phone.</p>
<p>I have a job. How can my employer contact me about work shifts?</p>	<p>Students should alert their employers about the school's mobile phone policy and advise that they may not see any messages the employer sends until after school.</p> <p>Alternative methods of contact such as email could also be used.</p>
<p>Can I take my mobile phone to excursions/sporting events?</p>	<p>Exemptions may be made for excursions/sporting events on a case-by-case scenario. In most cases phones will be locked in the pouch during the excursion.</p>
<p>What happens if I lose or damage my pouch?</p>	<p>The school will fund and provide all students with their first mobile phone pouch. If a pouch is lost or damaged, parents/carers and students will be responsible for purchasing a new pouch from the school office for \$20.</p>
<p>What happens if I forgot to bring my Pouch?</p>	<p>Your mobile phone must be locked in the school safe for the day.</p>