

# Student mobile phones in government schools – policy

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## 1. Summary

From 1 January 2023, student mobile phones are not permitted to be used in Northern Territory government schools. Exemptions apply for teacher directed educational purposes or medical reasons.

## 2. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to:

- eliminate disruption to educational programs through the receipt and transmission of phone calls or messages
- eliminate privacy concerns related to photographs or recording conversations without the knowledge of those being recorded
- provide a safe environment to learn without inappropriate use of, or distractions from, mobile phones and smart watches, such as cyberbullying, threats of violence, or accessing inappropriate materials via the internet
- provide greater opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during school break times.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all Northern Territory government schools.

This policy does not apply to outside hours school care services run by external providers.

## 4. Policy requirements

Under this policy:

- Students in preschool to year 6 are not permitted to have mobile phones in their possession during the school day.
- Students from year 7 to 12 are permitted to remain in possession of mobile phones during the school day. However, mobile phones must be off and away all day and stored securely.
- A student may be granted an exemption for the following use of mobile phones during the school day:
  - to monitor a health condition as part of a school approved documented health care plan
  - for a particular educational purpose under the direct instruction of a teacher
  - with permission of a teacher for a specific purpose
  - in the event of an emergency.
- Smart watches must be placed on flight mode so phone calls and messages cannot be sent or received during the school day.

## 5. Local school policy decisions

For schools, this policy means:

- Students in preschool to year 6 will not be permitted to have their mobile phones in their possession during the school day. Each school will implement collection points.
- Students in years 7 to 12 who choose to bring mobile phones to school must ensure they are off and away all day and stored securely.
- Consequences for non-compliance with this policy are to be in line with the school's student behaviour and wellbeing policy.
- Exemptions are available for students who are required to monitor a health condition. The school must have an approved health care plan with the student and family.

This information must be captured in the school's local mobile phones policy using the appropriate template.

Important considerations for schools, when developing their school's local mobile phones policy, include taking into account the views and needs of the school community, for example school staff, students, and families, and the potential impact of any decisions on specific groups of students such as students with a disability, students with English as an additional language or dialect, Aboriginal students, students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and students who are vulnerable.

The school's local mobile phones policy must be endorsed and ratified by the school representative body and must be communicated and easily accessible to all staff, students, and families.

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1. Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- implementing the Student mobile phones in government schools' policy in their educational environment
- ensuring the school's local mobile phone policy is consistent with the department's student mobile phones in government schools' policy, and that the school's local mobile phones policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff, and families.
- considering and approving requests for exemptions from the school's local mobile phones policy from parents or individual students due to exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis
- managing breaches of the school's local mobile phones policy in accordance with the student wellbeing and positive behaviour policy.
- modelling the behaviours of the school's local mobile phones policy to ensure a consistent approach.
- supporting families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible, and respectful use of mobile phones to their children.

## 6.2. School representative bodies

School representative bodies are responsible for:

- endorsing and ratifying the school's local mobile phones policy.

## 6.3. Teachers

Teachers are responsible for:

- modelling the behaviours of the school's local mobile phones policy to ensure a consistent approach in the educational environment
- ensuring students who are given permission to access their mobile phones are monitored to use them appropriately and only for the specified purpose, storing mobile phones away after the exempted activity has concluded
- supporting parents to understand the policy and for promoting responsible and respectful use of student mobile phones
- making sure that any student mobile phones and smart watches handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student or parent.

## 6.4. Students in primary schools

Students in primary schools are responsible for:

- ensuring they comply with the school's local mobile phones policy and follow all reasonable directions from school staff
- ensuring they hand in their mobile phones to the appropriate person prior to the start of the school day
- if permitted to use a mobile phone at school in line with a policy exemption, doing so in a safe, responsible, and respectful way, and supporting peers to do the same.

## 6.5. Students in secondary schools

Students in secondary schools are responsible for:

- ensuring they comply with the school's local mobile phones policy and follow all reasonable directions from school staff
- ensuring any mobile phones are off and away all day and stored securely
- if permitted to use a mobile phone at school in line with a policy exemption, doing so in a safe, responsible, and respectful way, and supporting peers to do the same.

## 6.6. Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- supporting the implementation of the school's local mobile phones policy and ensuring their child complies with the policy
- notifying the school if their child requires an exemption to the school's local mobile phones policy for medical purposes and providing the school with the appropriate documents to support the requirement for exemption
- using the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school or to contact their child during school hours, including where a student requires early collection from school
- recognising the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone and smart watches in a safe, responsible, and respectful way.

## 7. Definitions

Term	Definition
Educational environments	All school premises, such as school buildings and school grounds, and during school excursions, camps, extracurricular activities, and other school organised functions.
Mobile phones and smart watches	Includes but are not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches, similar smart devices and all other devices that allow electronically based distractions.
Off and away all day	The device must be switched off, not accessed, seen, or heard at any time during school hours and includes before and after school hours, and break times.
Parent	A child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility or daily care and control of that child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition.
School community	All school staff, families, students, and persons who have direct involvement or interest in the school.

## 8. Related resources, policies and legislation

### 8.8. Related resources

#### 8.8.1. Internal

[Excursions policy](#)

[NT Guide for implementation](#)

[Personal digital devices in educational environments policy](#)

[Sexualised behaviour in children guidelines and supporting documents](#)

[Student wellbeing and positive behaviour policy](#)

##### 8.8.1.1. Templates

[Combined school's mobile phones policy – Template](#)

[Primary school's mobile phones policy – Template](#)

[Secondary school's mobile phones policy – Template](#)

#### 8.8.2. External

[Australian Cyber Security Centre – Step-by-step guides](#)

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner:

- [Cyberbullying](#)
- [eSafety education for educators](#)
- [eSafety kids](#)
- [Professional learning program for teachers](#)
- [Toolkit for schools](#)

[Australian Securities & Investment Commission \(ASIC\) MoneySmart teacher resources – Mobile phones](#)

[NT Government health and wellbeing of students – Bullying, cyberbullying and cybersafety](#)

### 8.9. Related legislation

[Anti-Discrimination Act 1992](#)

[Criminal Code Act 1983](#)

[Education Act 2015](#)

[Information Act 2002](#)

[Surveillance Devices Act 2007](#)

<b>Document title</b>	Student mobile phones in government schools – policy
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<b>Approved by</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Date approved</b>	9 November 2022
<b>TRM number</b>	50:DBOX22:2260

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	8 November 2022	Teaching and Learning Services	First version