



MELBOURNE
RUDOLF STEINER
SCHOOL

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

For students, staff, parents and visitors.

The Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has a thoughtful, careful approach when introducing electronic technology into our school environment. Please read the following document for details of mobile phone use in our school.

February 2023

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Introduction

The Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School (MRSS) has a thoughtful, careful approach when introducing electronic technology into our school environment. Our school values the contribution and opportunities of various technologies that align and complement the Steiner philosophy.

This policy aims to meet the global immersion in electronic technologies with the philosophy and impulse of the school. Increasingly, electronic technologies such as mobile phones have been present in children's lives at younger ages and often pose a distraction to the way we learn and teach. On the other hand, they provide an often-important communication tool when traveling to and from school. With this in mind the current policy has been developed with the consideration and final approval of The College of Teachers, Administration group and Secondary Teaching group to uphold the values of the school, maintain student safety and protect personal equipment.

This policy covers all of the school community, staff, students and visitors. It is to be noted that it asks for an increased parental involvement and support than may have been expected in the past.

PURPOSE

To provide clear expectations to students, parents and staff regarding the responsible and appropriate use of mobile phones by students at MRSS and to ensure that mobile phone usage does not cause disruption to the learning environment or social setting.

AIMS

- To prevent any disruption to teaching and learning by the use of mobile telephones.
- To promote social interaction amongst students without the reliance on mobile phones.
- To facilitate the effective protection and supervision of all students.
- To educate students about appropriate use of social media in order to prevent harm to themselves and to others.
- To protect the privacy of all MRSS community members, particularly students and members of staff.

DEFINITIONS

Mobile phone refers to hand-held electronic device, tablets, ear buds and smart watches.

Parents and Visitors

We request that parents do not operate or expose mobile phones in the playground where children are present. Young children can be distracted by the mere presence of a phone and drawn away from their natural play. If parents need to use a phone on school grounds we ask that they only use them either in the school office or once back in the car.

Primary School

Our understanding of how children develop is informed by the unique insights given to us by Rudolf Steiner. Over the years it becomes progressively more appropriate for children to engage with a greater degree of abstraction from the natural world and to enter into more logical informed thinking. The feeling life of children becomes actively awake once they reach the teenage years.

Perceptions of the outer world are formed through real lived experience. During the formative years, this experience is vital to inform what it is to be truly human. Engagement with the “digital world” inhibits and confuses this process.

With this understanding, it is not appropriate for Primary aged children to engage with digital technology including phones. We ask that parents respect our policy that students in Primary School do not carry a mobile phone to school, own one, or in any way bring one into the peer group.

There may be very rare instances where a Primary aged child may need a phone, such as when a child has serious medical condition. If this is the case phone use must be brought in full consultation between parents and the Class Teacher.

Classes 7 to 10

It is a requirement of school that all students, staff, parents and visitors understand this policy and the role they need to play in supporting the values of the school.

INTRODUCTION

MRSS recognises that many students feel a need to carry a mobile phone and accepts that there are genuine reasons for their use (for example to contact parents after music, sports practice, or whilst travelling to and from the school). However, they can be disruptive to the learning environment and negatively impact on the development of students’ skills of social interaction. Therefore, the College has developed a set of expectations relating to the possession and use of mobile phones.

IMPLEMENTATION

Phones are not to be used at any time by students on school property unless under staff supervision. This includes before and after official class times of 8:45am – 3:25pm. After-school students must not use phones until they are beyond the rotunda at the northern car park, or other clear school boundaries. If yard duty staff see children using a phone they will not be confiscated however, guardians will be notified the following day and consequences followed as per policy.

Phones to be handed in during Morning Verse. Each class has a wooden box with a padlock to hold the phones for the day. This box is secured in the classroom and the lock is able to be opened with any staff key.

The top section of the box where the post slot is holds the phones that are confiscated or if a student arrives late and a staff member is not present. Also, a class list that guardians can use to keep track of people caught with phones and calls made home to parents in response.

The bottom section of the box holds the phones that were handed in during the morning.

Phones are then handed back during Afternoon Verse time.

STAFF ACTIONS IF A STUDENT IS FOUND WITH A PHONE

1. Staff member or student to take their phone directly to their room and post it in the box.
2. If a student is sent to do it then it is the responsibility of the staff member to let the Class Guardians know of the breach of phone policy.
3. Guardians are then to follow up in line with consequences as set out in this policy.

BREACHES

Students who use their mobile phone inappropriately at school may be issued with consequences consistent with our school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement, Student Code of Conduct and/or Bullying policies. In some circumstances, students' mobile phones may be confiscated and stored securely.

Unless a breach of this policy is considered to be of a serious nature*, the following consequences will apply:

First time

Lunchtime detention with parents notified by guardians via phone or email.

Second time

After-school detention to be facilitated during a P7 class. Parents notified and asked to stop students bringing their phone at all and made aware of the next level of consequences should this happen again.

Third time

Parents will be asked to come in to collect the phone and meet the guardians to discuss their child's phone use. If no safety issue and with parental consent the phone is kept in the locked classroom box until parents can arrange pick up. Parents will be made aware of this consequence after the second incident.

Fourth time

Increased parental involvement and support at the discretion of the guardians with reference to the school's general *Behavioural Management Policy* as opposed to the *Mobile Phone Policy*.

NOTES

The above incidents will occur over the timeframe of 1 term. There may be some flexibility around the progression of stage 3 to 4. If a guardian feels the circumstances require visiting stage 3 twice before stage 4 they may do so.

Staff, parents and visitors will endeavour to keep their personal mobile phone use away from public spaces, eg library, dining room, school yard and confined to personal offices and spaces.

***BREACHES OF PHONE USE CONSIDERED TO BE SERIOUS MISCONDUCT**

The accessing and /or sharing of pornographic or inappropriate material, at school or on the way to school on school operated transport will not be tolerated and will be treated as “serious misconduct”. This also includes sexting, sending images of an explicit nature, cyberbullying, accessing another’s phone or device without the owner’s permission.

SPECIAL EXEMPTIONS

If a student is deemed by the Special Education Department to need to take photos of whiteboards etc during class then the class teacher can do this on their phone and send it to the student before the lesson ends. Other uses of technology will be individually assessed on a case by case basis.

Year 11 and 12

Students in Years 11 and 12 are required to keep their phones and earbuds/earphones in their lockers at all times. Students are not permitted to carry their phones or earbuds/earphones with them during school times. On rare occasions a teacher may authorise VCE students to use their phones to complete an educational task, for example to document experiments in a science class or photograph a record of folio work in art. At these times the subject teacher will be responsible for the phones being returned to the lockers.

Any phones which are seen will be taken and deposited into a phone box until the end of the day.

Repeated confiscation of phones will result in parents being asked to keep the phones at home until the student is able to manage these school expectations on their own.