

Title	Personal Communication Devices in Schools Policy
Description of policy	This policy supports schools to manage the use of mobile devices, including mobile phones and smart watches. It sets out options to limit device use during school hours and to manage their use where it supports teaching and learning.
Required because	Many CECG schools seek to manage mobile phone and other device use in a way that promotes learning and positive social interactions. This policy provides guidance to improve consistency and support for schools seeking to manage device use during school hours.
Description of changes	New document
Applies to	☐ Organisation-wide ☒ Specific: Schools ☐ Staff only ☐ Students only ☒ Staff and students
Status	☒ New ☐ Major revision of existing document ☐ Minor revision of existing document

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This policy sets out options for schools to limit use of mobile devices during school hours, and to manage their use where it supports teaching and learning.
- 1.2 CECG and its schools understand that digital devices have become an important part of life, work, and schooling. While schools encourage students to leave phones and other devices at home, it can be important for students to have access to devices before or after school, for example to communicate with family or navigate public transport.
- 1.3 Mobile devices during school hours also present challenges such as distracting students during learning time, privacy and IT security risks, or contributing to anti-social behaviour. Schools have a duty to support learning time and limit distractions.
- 1.4 Schools can play a role in supporting students to balance these issues and develop skills and habits to use technology positively, at school and in their future.
- 1.5 This policy applies to mobile devices including mobile phones, smartwatches, and headphones.

2. Personal Communication Devices in Schools Policy

- 2.1 CECG schools will determine how mobile are used or managed during school hours through Statement of Practice. See for example [Template Statement of Practice](#).
- 2.2 Schools may restrict mobile devices, including:
 - Off and Away for the Day – where devices must be switched off and stored in bags or lockers at all times on school grounds or during off-campus school events (e.g. excursions).
 - Put it Away restriction – where devices must be switched off and stored during class, but students are permitted to use phones at other times.
- 2.3 If phones are permitted in school for any reason, Students should not photograph or record other people in classes or on school grounds outside of appropriate schoolwork.
- 2.4 Photographs or recordings must not be taken or shared in any circumstances without the express consent of all people involved. Written parental consent is required for schools to share a student's image or recording for official school activities, such as newsletters or media.
 - Written consent must be retained in school files.
 - Standing consent (e.g. obtained in the Enrolment Application) should be flagged in the school's student information service (e.g. Compass).
 - Additional consent may be required if sharing a student's full name plus image, for example in a specific media campaign or newsletter.
- 2.5 Schools mobile devices and schoolwork devices must be used in line [Student Acceptable Use of Devices Policy](#) and [Agreement](#).
- 2.6 Mobile devices may be temporarily confiscated if students do not abide by the School-Based Practice regarding devices.
- 2.7 Schools are not responsible for mobile devices lost or damaged at school.

3. Exemptions

3.1 A Principal (or delegate) may approve a student to use mobile devices where necessary, for example:

- to monitor a health condition
- for students who are the primary carer for a child or family member
- when needed to support an individual learning plan
- where the device is used for translation by a student with English as an additional language or dialect.

Educational use

3.2 Teachers may seek principal (or delegate) approval for students to use mobile devices during class, where they consider the device adds value to the learning program that cannot be supported by a student's schoolwork device.

4. Implementation

4.1 If students do not abide by the school practices regarding devices, schools have discretion to confiscate the device. Schools require devices to be picked up by the student or their parent(s).

4.2 If staff believe or identify that a student has brought prohibited items to school they can:

- Ask the student to surrender prohibited items.
- Ask the student to empty pockets, locker, or bag for inspection.
- Temporarily confiscate prohibited items that are surrendered.
 - This does not extend to reaching into a bag or locker to remove a prohibited item.
- Examine confiscated items as part of investigating facts for any disciplinary action (e.g. examine unlocked mobile devices)

4.3 If the school considers a search is required, staff may:

- Supervise a student separately from their bag or device, until a search can be conducted by parents or law enforcement.
- Contact parents and request parents search a student or a student's bag/locker, if the parent consents to do so.
- Contact law enforcement in the case of suspected illegal activity.

4.4 Schools have discretion to respond to prohibited items or behaviour with disciplinary action in line with the CECG [Behavioural Support Suspension and Expulsion Policy](#).

Prohibited actions

4.5 CECG staff must not:

- Physically search a student, with or without their consent (e.g. frisk or pat down).
- Search a student's bag or locker and remove items from it.
 - This is distinct from asking a student to empty a bag/locker, to move items around to permit inspection, or asking the student to surrender prohibited items.

- 4.6 Searches can place staff at risk of injury (e.g. sharp objects in bags) or lead to allegations of improper force or tainted evidence. They must only be conducted by law enforcement or parents.

5. Definitions

- 5.1 **Personal Communication Device:** Devices used primarily for communication including mobile phones, smartwatches, and headphones. Does not include students' schoolwork devices such as laptops and tablet computers.
- 5.2 **Schoolwork Device:** Devices used to support teaching and learning such as laptop, desktop or tablet computers – whether personal devices or issued by the school-issued devices. They are not prohibited but are subject to the Student Acceptable Use of ICT Policy.

6. Related Documents and Legislation

- 6.1 Related CECG Documents:
- [Student Acceptable Use of ICT Policy](#)
- 6.2 Related legislation or Standards
- [Privacy Act 1988](#)

7. Contact

- 7.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the CECG Teaching and Learning team.