

MOBILE PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

PURPOSE

This policy explains our requirements and expectations relating to the student use of personal electronic devices during school hours and school activities outside school hours, in accordance with:

- Ministerial Order No. 1515 – Personal Electronic Devices in Victorian schools
- *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices or other personal electronic devices, including smart watches, wireless earbuds, headphones, and other devices capable of communication, internet connectivity, notifications, recording, or audio playback are not permitted for use while travelling on school buses, on excursions or camps, and during the school day unless specifically authorised as part of a documented exemption or approved learning activity. Exceptions may apply for students who require such devices for health, wellbeing, or other approved educational purposes.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All students at Little Yarra Steiner School; and
2. Students' mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices, personal audio devices and all other personal electronic devices.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive hearing device means a device manufactured for the primary purpose of assisting a person with a hearing impairment to hear, including hearing aids, cochlear implants, external sound processors and remote microphones designed for use with hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Mobile phone means a telephone with the capacity to connect to cellular telecommunication systems.

Personal audio device means wired or wireless headphones, earphones or headsets.

School hours means the hours within which a student is expected to attend the school at which they are enrolled. For the purposes of this policy, this also includes any travel by school bus and the entire duration of activities off site, such as excursions and camps.

Smart glasses means a device that is designed to be worn as spectacles and has the capability to send, receive, store, record or process digital information.

Wearable device means a device that is designed to be worn on the body and that has the capability to send, receive, store, record or process digital information, including a smartwatch, but does not include an assistive hearing device, a surgically implanted medical device, or smart glasses.

POLICY

At the Little Yarra Steiner School, student:

- mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices and other personal electronic devices must be switched off and stored during school hours in a way that restricts students' access to them.
- personal audio devices may not be used during school hours.

Exemptions to this policy may be granted if certain conditions are met (see below for further information).

When emergencies occur, parents or carers should reach their child by calling the school's office.

Storage of mobile phones, smart glasses and other personal electronic devices

Students are encouraged not to bring mobile phones or smart glasses, wearable devices or other personal electronic devices to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Personal electronic devices owned by students or their parents/carers if brought to school are at the owner's risk.

Where students bring mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices or other personal electronic devices to school, they must store them during school hours in a way that restricts their access to them. Mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices or other personal electronic devices brought to school by students in Classes 9 to 12 will be collected by Class Guardians at the commencement of Main Lesson and securely stored until the end of the school day, when they may be returned to students. In any other circumstance, students may hand their devices to the Front Office for secure storage until the end of the school day.

Enforcement and inappropriate use of personal electronic devices

Students who use mobile phones, smart glasses, wearable devices or personal audio devices inappropriately may be issued with consequences as per the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Management Policy.

Inappropriate use of a mobile phone, smart glasses, wearable device and other personal electronic device includes using it, failing to have it switched off, or failing to store it in a way that restricts access to it during school hours, unless an exemption has been granted.

Inappropriate use of a personal audio device is any use during school hours unless a specific use is permitted by this policy or an exemption has been granted.

Inappropriate use of any personal electronic device includes use:

- that disrupts the learning of others
- to send messages or make phone calls that are inappropriate, harassing or threatening
- to engage in inappropriate social media use, including cyberbullying

- to capture audio, video or images of people, including students, teachers and members of the school community, without their knowledge or permission
- to capture audio, video or images in toilets, change rooms, swimming pools or gyms
- to gain an unfair advantage during exams and assessments.

Exemptions

Exemptions to restrictions on personal electronic devices other than smart glasses may be granted to individual students or groups of students by the principal or a teacher, in accordance with this policy, under the following three exemption categories:

- to support student learning, for example:
 - specific learning activities
 - reasonable adjustments because of a disability and/or learning need
- to support student health and wellbeing, for example:
 - students with a health condition
- to manage risks to students relating to participation in offsite activities, for example:
 - travel to and from excursions and camps
 - activities not on school grounds and unsupervised
 - during inter-school travel.

A teacher may grant exemptions for devices other than smart glasses, in accordance with this policy and the direction of the principal.

Where an exemption is granted, the student may only use the personal electronic device for the specific purpose outlined in the exemption.

Ministerial Order 1515 requires exemptions to be documented in writing, including:

- the student or group of students to whom the exemption applies;
- the basis on which the exemption has been granted;
- the period for which the exemption applies; and
- any limitations or conditions on the scope of the exemption.

For mobile phones, smart glasses and wearable devices, this documentation must be separate from the school's Mobile Phones and Personal Electronic Devices policy.

The principal or teacher granting the exemption decides where these details are recorded based on the type of exemption and the needs of the student or group of students. This ensures details are recorded in the appropriate place, for example in:

- camp or excursion planning documents
- a student's administrative record.

Exemptions that do not disclose student health or disability information may also be recorded in:

- lesson plans
- units of work.

Exemptions for personal audio devices

At the Little Yarra Steiner School, the following exemptions apply to student use of personal audio devices:

- for learning purposes during private study periods in a designated study area
- during music classes
- if instructed by their teacher to manage an unexpected health or wellbeing issue during school hours

Exemptions for smart glasses

An exemption for smart glasses can only be granted by the Principal or their delegate and will only be granted:

- where their use is a reasonable adjustment for a student with disability, for example, a student with vision impairment, and
- the adjustment cannot be reasonably provided for by another device or approach.

Any exemption will be limited to the functions and circumstances required for the adjustment.

Camps and excursions

The policy restrictions on all personal electronic devices continue to apply when students are on excursions or camps, unless an exemption is granted.

In addition to the other requirements outlined in this policy:

- students must not bring mobile phones to school camps or excursions, including those outside school hours, unless an exemption has been approved by the school.
- if students are permitted to bring a mobile phone for a particular camp or excursion, the school will advise students and parents/carers in advance.

Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- school-owned devices
- assistive hearing devices (including hearing aids and cochlear implants)

A student undertaking workplace or curriculum-related offsite learning activities managed by an external provider, for example, work experience or offsite VCE studies, must comply with any policies of the provider or employer responsible for the activity.

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2027