

Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Processes

Introduction:

The Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy describes the mandatory requirements for students in the use of mobile phones and other personal communications devices.

Students may not access their device or use technology connected to the device via physical wires, wireless tethering, Bluetooth, or hotspot.

A copy of the Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools Policy can be accessed on the Education Directorate's website https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/Computers_Devices-and-Internet/internet-and-online-communication-services/personal-use-of-communication-devices-in-act-public-schools-policy2

Expectations:

- Students are strongly encouraged to leave their devices at home.
- Students may not use or access devices at school, including before school, recess and lunch, or during school authorised events, unless a formal and specific exemption has been approved by the school principal.
- When at school, the device is 'put away' and turned off. It is secured out of sight in a safe place, such as a locker or school bag.
- The device must not be on a student's person, on the student's desk or in the student's work area.
- Students bring their devices to school at their own risk and Telopea Park School is not responsible for loss or damage.

Procedures if a device is sighted/used:

1. No phones, or other personal communication devices, can be used at school, unless an exemption has been approved (see "exemptions" section)
2. If a student is seen with a phone, or other personal communication devices, by any staff member at any time on school grounds they will be sent to executive staff (primary) or A3 (secondary) to hand it in for the day²
 - a. The parent/carer will be notified via email
 - b. The student can collect the device at the end of the day
3. If a student persists in using the device on future days, the parent/carer will be contacted and will need to attend the school to collect the device and a suitable management plan will be put in place, in consultation with parents/carers.

Teachers may be required to use their phone in class due to an emergency or work issue. The rights and responsibilities of staff are different to students. Despite this, staff are encouraged to model good practice and appropriate use of their phone when at school.

Persistent noncompliance may result in:

- The school's student management policy emphasises Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) principles, focusing on teaching and reinforcing Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) expectations that all personal communication devices should be kept out of sight on school grounds. Students are expected to comply with these behavioural expectations, and non-compliance will be addressed in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures outlined in the student management policy as below.
 - The student being asked to leave their device at home or secured in a phone locker.
 - In-school consequences such as detentions, check sheets, and behaviour contracts.
 - More serious consequences, up to and including mutually agreed leave and suspension.

Alternative Communication:

- Alternative means of contact during the school day can be provided via email to tlpsprimaryadmin@ed.act.edu.au and copy in your child's teachers (primary) or telopeatstudentwelfare@ed.act.edu.au (secondary)
- If parents wish to get an urgent message to their child during school hours, they can reach them via the primary front office 61423388 (primary) or Student Services Administration team on 61423385 (secondary).
- Students may check their devices for messages at the conclusion of the school day, after the final school bell at 3:15pm.

Exemptions:

Students who access a device as an assistive technology that forms part of reasonable adjustment or forms part of management or monitoring of a medical condition may apply for an exemption to the processes that Teloopa Park School has established to implement the *ACT Education Directorate Personal Use of Communication Devices in ACT Public Schools policy*.

To apply for an exemption, please complete the form at

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AFsCTXgSDgHa2njOG0Ar7lakyefJjq5p/edit?usp=sharing&oid=114439137912343497148&rtpof=true&sd=true> and send it with supporting documentation to kylie.louis@ed.act.edu.au (primary) or telopeatstudentwelfare@ed.act.edu.au (Secondary).

Exemption applications will be assessed as early as possible. You will be contacted with one of the following outcomes within 2 weeks:

- Pending additional information – the initial application did not have enough information or supporting documentation
- Approved – the student will be given a personal communication slip which they can show to staff when using their device as outlined in their plans
- Not approved – the application did not meet the criteria outlined

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. A need to manage or monitor a medical condition: parents/carers will need to have an Education Directorate Known Medical Condition Response Plan or individual learning plan, for those students requiring assistive technologies. This will need to be supported by evidence from a medical specialist or allied health professional outlining the medical need for the communications device and how the device is used to manage or monitor the medical condition. It should also detail how and when the device is to be used.
2. To meet caring or family responsibilities where the student has extenuating personal circumstances that require them to have more ready access to their personal device, such as being a parent themselves or a primary carer to a younger sibling or unwell family member: proof of carer status documentation, dependent's birth certificate or a statutory declaration outlining the clear need for the student to receive an exemption.
3. Other extenuating circumstances need to be supported with evidence or a statutory declaration outlining the clear need for the student to receive an exemption. This should include specific information outlining why the alternative communication channels as outlined below are not appropriate for the student to access.

Review and Improvement

To ensure the effectiveness of these processes and identify areas for enhancement, our school will review device storage, and communication protocols and implementation procedures. This ongoing evaluation aims to refine our practices and ensure their alignment with the evolving needs of our school community.

Date of Publishing: 23.01.2024

Date for Review: April 2024

¹ Students who require a phone for a documented medical purpose can apply for an exemption.

² Whilst staff will take all reasonable steps to keep collected devices safe, the school does not accept liability for any devices which are handed in. If a parent has concerns for the safety of their student's device when collected, they are able to collect it immediately, instead of it being kept with staff for the day. If you would like this option, please contact the leadership on kylie.louis@ed.act.edu.au (primary) or telopeastudentwelfare@ed.act.edu.au (secondary)