

Mobile Phone Policy & Procedure

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the GSSC Mobile Phone Policy?

GSSC's policy around mobile phones is straightforward: ***if brought to school, they must be switched off and stored securely during the school day.*** At GSSC, we prefer students not bring mobile phones to school at all.

So it's simple - ***switch off, store or leave at home***

Does the policy apply to smartwatches?

Yes. While these FAQs reference mobile phones, they apply to any mobile device with similar functionality – like a smartwatch or ear buds synced to a phone.

Is GSSC's policy unique or unusual?

No, there is nothing unique about banning phones during school hours. This has been the policy for all Victorian government schools since 2020. In fact, all states and territories now have phone bans in place at public schools and the vast majority of private and independent schools do the same.

Why ban mobile phones at school?

Studies from here and overseas clearly show proven educational benefits in banning mobile phones in schools – that is why the rest of the country (and much of the world!) does so.

Schools with effective bans have improved student achievement and calmer learning environments – with lower-achieving students making the greatest gains. We also know mobile phones contribute to problems including non-attendance in class, cyber-bullying and anti-social behaviour.

What is meant by “school hours” or “the school day”? What about lunchtime?

Students must switch off and securely store their mobile phone from the first bell signifying the commencement of classes to the final school bell of the afternoon.

This includes leaving the device in their locker during recess and lunchtime. Students who purchase food from the school canteen will require cash or a debit card to do so. A student in possession of a mobile phone during school hours will be deemed to be using it and in breach of this policy.

Are there exemptions to the policy?

Yes, but exemptions are strictly limited, specially documented and can only be granted by school leadership. Exemptions include those students requiring a mobile device to manage a medical condition or where teachers have granted a classroom-based learning exception.

Other exemptions, such as a school excursion, are determined by school leadership on their merits.

Are there consequences for not adhering to the policy?

Yes. Our staff will encourage students to do the right thing by ensuring mobile phones are locked away during school times. Students found using or in possession of a mobile phone during school hours will have it handed in at reception for collection at the end of the day.

There are more serious consequences for students who persist with mobile phone use.

Who is responsible for mobile phones on school property?

Students who bring mobile phones to school do so at their own risk. Like most schools, GSSC does not have insurance for accidental property damage or theft. That is another reason why we encourage students and their families to simply leave their phone at home.

What can I, as a parent or carer, do to help?

A great deal. We know separating some teenagers from their mobile phone can lead to difficult conversations – many of our teachers are also parents! We are asking you to:

- **Reinforce our policy.** Make sure your child knows that mobile phones are to be switched off and stored throughout the school day. Make sure they understand it is reasonable and expected for staff to enforce this rule.
- **Reconsider taking a mobile phone to school.** With very rare exceptions, your child does not need a mobile phone during school hours.

What if I urgently need to get hold of my child – or they need to get hold of me?

Always remember, in emergencies parents can contact their children via our main reception on 5891 2000. This links to reception desks in each House, so staff can quickly identify an individual student's year level, current location and relay any message or organise contact.

Please ensure your contact details are up to date with GSSC, so we can also alert you immediately should your child need to contact a parent or carer.

Will the effort be worth the reward?

Absolutely. GSSC will be a better place to socialise and learn without the anxiety and intrusion of mobile phone use – and that means **switch off, store or leave at home**. We need our students to switch off, so they can switch on at school!