Secondary Student Use of Mobile Phones and Personal Devices Policy based on DfE Policy

UHS Procedures Policy	***Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy***
Leader Responsible	Principal
Status	Approved
Approved Date for publishing	01/07/2026
Review Date	01/06/2027

PURPOSE

This policy provides direction to students, staff and families about managing personal mobile phones and other digital devices that students choose to bring to school. Digital devices include, but are not limited to, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, earbuds and headphones. This policy applies while students are at school or attending an authorised school activity such as an excursion during school hours.

Students, staff, and families are reminded that Underdale High school has a well-defined and supported School Laptop Program. This policy works in conjunction with Underdale High School's ICT Student Use Policy and the Department for Education Behaviour Support Policy and is in line with the Department for Education's 2022/3 direction around the removal of Mobile/Personal devices from all schools.

USE OF DEVICES (SPECIFICALLY LAPTOPS AND HEADPHONES) DURING INSTRUCTION AND EVENTS

At Underdale High School, all students must ensure that personal devices, including laptops, smartwatches, tablets, earbuds and headphones are not in use whenever a teacher, staff member, or presenter is giving explicit or general instructions, and has requested that these devices be put away. This requirement applies in all school environments, including classrooms, assemblies, and any other school events.

During these times:

- Laptops must be closed and placed away from immediate use.
- Earbuds and headphones must be removed from both ears and from around the head.

This expectation ensures that all students are attentive and able to participate fully in the learning environment and that instructions are heard clearly. Non-compliance will be managed in line with the school's behaviour management procedures.

While at school, all contact with students is to be directed through Student Services.

Mobile phones or personal devices with internet connectivity (e.g. smart watches and tablets) should remain at home.

We ask that where possible mobile phones or personal devices should remain at home. In the event that a device must be brought to school (for security or travel reasons), students must keep these turned off and locked in their school locker as soon as a student is at school and removed from the locker once student is leaving school, unless granted an exemption by their school under the Department's policy (see Exemption sections below). While our school recognises that students and families may feel there are significant legitimate reasons for students to bring a mobile phone or personal device to school, this is not appropriate.

This will ensure:

- safe environments with reduced negative impacts of inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying, exposure to harmful content, and critical incidents that involve mobile phones
- classroom environments where teachers can teach, and students can learn free from distractions caused by personal use of devices
- use of breaks as quality time away from screens, encouraging physical activity and play and meaningful face-to-face connections with peers

EXEMPTIONS

Families who believe that their student has a legitimate reason for an exemption under the following categories can apply to the relevant Leader in writing who will seek an official exemption from the school Principal.

Exemptions can be granted for:

- monitoring or managing a medical condition (application to Year Level Leader)
- a student disability or learning difficulty (application to Inclusive Education Leader)
- personal circumstances requiring more ready access to their phone, such a primary carer (Wellbeing Leader)
- a group on a specific camp or excursion to maintain communication/safety reasons (Deputy Principal)

Students who have been issued an exemption can only use the mobile phone or personal device for the purpose for which the exemption was granted. Any use of these devices must be in line with this policy, and done in a safe, responsible, and respectful way.

Exemptions, if approved, will be recorded on Compass and a High Priority note will be made visible for staff to see.

STORAGE OF PERSONAL DEVICES

Headphones and earbuds connected to personal devices must be "off and away" during the school day, including break times, unless authorised for a specific learning activity.

During the school day (Monday 9:45am-3:10pm and Tuesday – Friday 8:45am-3:10pm) mobile phones and personal devices must be switched off and stored in the student locker. Students who bring mobile phones and/or personal devices to school, do so at their own risk. The school does not accept any responsibility for any loss arising from a failure of a lock provided by the school or any failure by the student to use an appropriate lock on their locker.

USE OF HEADPHONES AND EARBUDS

Headphones, earbuds (wired or wireless), and similar listening devices are considered personal devices when connected to a ***mobile phone or other non-school authorised device***.

In line with the Department for Education direction and this policy, headphones and earbuds must not be worn or used during the school day unless authorised by a teacher for a specific learning purpose, or where an approved exemption has been granted by the Principal or their delegate.

The default position at Underdale High School is that headphones and earbuds are not to be visible, worn around the neck, in ears, or used during lesson time, transitions between classes, or during recess and lunch.

Headphones and earbuds may only be used when:

- A teacher has allowed students to use them for a specific learning task.
- They are required as part of an approved learning adjustment or disability support.
- They are being used ***with a school-issued or school-approved device*** for an identified educational purpose.

Students must immediately remove and store headphones/earbuds when instructed by a staff member.

Use of headphones or earbuds to access a mobile phone, stream content, make calls, send messages, or otherwise circumvent this policy will be treated as a breach of the Mobile Phone and Personal Device Policy.

Failure to comply with reasonable instructions regarding headphone or earbud use will result in consequences consistent with the 'If the Student Does Not Comply' section of this policy.

IF THE STUDENT DOES NOT COMPLY

If a student fails to comply with this policy, the following steps will be taken by the school. These steps are derived from the School's Behaviour Policy.

1. **Informal Warning**: Informal warning and request for student to lock device away in school locker immediately. Chronicle is created on Compass.
2. **Subsequent Warning**: Device will be confiscated. Chronicle is created on Compass.
3. **Second Subsequent Warning**: After school detention. Device will be confiscated. Chronicle is created on Compass. Letter sent home to caregiver/ guardian.
4. **Third Subsequent Warning:** Referral to Year Level Leader for further consequences (can include detention) Device will be confiscated. Chronicle is created on Compass. Letter sent home. Student is placed on probation for two weeks; where they are required to hand in their device at the beginning of each day to Student Services.

If this situation occurs, the student's failure to follow reasonable instructions from the teacher may result in an escalation of the level of consequences for the student's actions.

1. If a device has been confiscated, it will be kept in a sealed envelope securely stored in a locked cabinet in Student Services
2. The student is to collect the device from Student Services at the end of the day
    - If a student's device has been confiscated 3 times, a parent may need to collect the device from the school

LAPTOPS

1. Laptops need to be switched off, or the screen lowered, during lesson time until the teacher has instructed that the device is to be used as it is appropriate for the learning task
2. Laptops not being used according to this Policy will be confiscated for the lesson and alternative arrangements will be made to meet the goals of the learning task

The use of a mobile phone and/or personal devices to interfere with, disrupt or harass others is not acceptable and is considered a serious breach of the UHS Culture of Respect. This includes, but is not limited to:

- An infringement on the privacy of another person
- Propagation of any form of malicious software
- Harassment and/or bullying of another individual or group
- Collection, possession and/or distribution of material obtained without a person's consent
- Sending/posting of materials or comments deemed to be offensive, hateful, threatening, pornographic, racist or incites violence.

This, along with other inappropriate use of a mobile phone and/or personal devices, may be addressed in conjunction with one or more of the following school policies:

- Behaviour
- Harassment and Bullying
- Personal Learning and Acceptable Use agreement

Any breach of policy may result in disciplinary action which includes but is not limited to: confiscation of devices, community service, learning catch-ups or suspension. Where illegal activity is suspected, police involvement may be required.

INTERNET CONNECTION FOR PERSONAL DEVICES

Students are not permitted to use their own mobile phone to undertake a learning activity.
Underdale High School has a stable school-wide WiFi network that provides students with wireless access to all online learning resources and materials. All students are required to read and sign the Personal Learning and Acceptable Use agreement so that they are aware of their responsibilities in using this school provisioned service. All students are supported to connect their laptop device to this service for secure and stable provisioning of internet access whilst at school. Mobile phones are not to be connected to the Underdale High School Wireless network as this can affect the number of available IP addresses on the network and as a result affect the number of devices that can be connected to the school's Wireless network.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal and Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure this policy is clearly communicated and accessible to all students, staff and families.
- Ensure there is a process for regular review of the policy.
- Ensure secure storage is provided for student personal devices that are handed in to school staff.
- Ensure processes are in place for monitoring internet and school network use by all members of the school community.
- Enforce the school's policy and responses to instances of non-compliance.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of personal devices in line with department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.
- Consider requests for exemptions from the school policy from parents/caregivers, adult or independent students on a case-by-case basis. Make sure that approved exemptions are documented and that relevant staff are informed about students' exemptions.
- Model appropriate use of personal devices and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of personal devices to their children.

School staff

- Deliver learning opportunities and maintain a safe and productive learning environment. Take steps to minimise distractions from the non-educational use of personal devices in the learning environment.
- Respond to instances of non-compliance in line with the school's policy.
- Report and respond to incidents of inappropriate use of mobile phones and/or personal devices in line with school/department policy and procedures and any legislative requirements.
- Make sure that any student mobile phones and/or personal devices handed in for their care are stored in a secure location and are returned to the student (or their parent).
- Model appropriate use of mobile phones and/or personal devices and support families to understand the importance of promoting safe, responsible and respectful use of mobile phones and/or personal devices to their children.

Students

- Comply with the requirements of the school's policy and follow all reasonable directions from the Principal and school staff.
- Communicate respectfully with others and do not use a mobile phone or other personal device to bully, harass or threaten another person.
- Respect others' rights to privacy and do not take photos, film or audio records of other people without their knowledge or permission.

Parents

- Support the implementation of the school's policy, including the consequences for non-compliance with the policy.
- Use the school's formal communication channels in all instances to communicate with the school (including where a student requires early collection from school). Encourage their child to always report to a school staff member in the first instance if they become unwell or experience an issue at school.
- Recognise the important role they play in supporting their child to use their mobile phone (or other personal device) in a safe, responsible and respectful way.
- Ensure that the student has a lock for their locker.