

SCHOOLS THAT HAVE IMPLEMENTED A MOBILE PHONE POLICY

CASE STUDY 1

EUROA SECONDARY COLLEGE

Euroa Secondary College is a co-educational secondary college located in the town of Euroa, approximately 169 km north-east of Melbourne. The school has a student population of 308.

The college introduced a [mobile technologies policy](#) at the start of 2019. The policy relates to the use of mobile phones, smart watches and headphones.

The Euroa Secondary College Mobile Technology Policy states that, 'Mobile phones (or other like devices) must not be visible' on school grounds during school hours unless the principal, or a staff member, has granted an exemption. Exceptions are made for students who require technology for a specific individual learning need, or where a teacher has allowed the device for a specified learning task. The college has mobile phone passes for learning tasks (a blue tag on a lanyard) which the teacher issues and collects after use.

The policy was co-designed with students and was introduced primarily to encourage student connectiveness, prosocial behaviours in the schoolyard and to balance screen time.

The school conducted student and staff consultations to discuss the intent of the policy and agree on reasonable conditions and consequences for misuse. A forum was also held to encourage parent input.

The policy was announced through the school newsletter, uploaded to the school's website and featured in the local paper. The focus of the policy was on fostering a positive and productive learning/school environment.

Implementation to date has been relatively simple, largely because of a tightly managed follow-up process with clear expectations and consequences that are consistently enforced. Consequences include students being asked to hand their phones in and collect them at the end of the day and, for repeated misuse, a family meeting is held.



Principal Harold Cheung believes the policy has had a positive impact. He has seen students being more active, talking more and proactively interacting with one another in the schoolyard at recess and lunchtime.

The school has a 1-to-1 notebook program from Years 7-12 to support students to build digital literacy skills. In addition, students participated in cyber safety workshops last year through the Alannah and Madeline Foundation and [Project Rockit](#)

Learnings that can support other schools:

- Seek teacher, student and parent input into the process with respect to operationalising the policy
- Contextualise the policy to your local setting and school community to avoid creating other unexpected outcomes
- Implement the policy consistently.

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CASE STUDY 2

GLEN EIRA COLLEGE

Glen Eira College is a co-educational secondary school located in Caulfield East in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs. It has a student population of approximately 800 students and hosts an English Language Centre for new arrivals. The college reports that almost every student brings a mobile phone to school.

The College introduced a new [mobile phone policy](#) in 2019. The policy states that 'whilst at school, in the buildings or outside on the grounds, at any time prior to the end of the school day phones must be switched off and locked securely in the student's locker'. No exemptions to this policy are permitted.

The policy was implemented at the request of parents who were concerned about the impact of mobile phone use at recess and lunchtime, on the development of students' social skills. Other factors included misuse of phones by some students in class.

To reach a consensus on how the policy should be implemented, the school surveyed parents, students and staff, and tested the policy with parent groups. School council endorsement was also sought.

The Mobile Phone Policy was announced via the school newsletter, email and posted to the school's website. Students were generally in support of the policy as they still had access to their Chromebooks in Years 8-10 and a notebook device of their choice in Years 11-12 as part of the school's 1-to-1 program.

The impact of the policy has meant less mobile phone distractions and inattention in classrooms. While the 1-to-1 devices are sometimes a source of distraction, fewer incidents are associated with these as they are easier to monitor and manage with device management software. 'The classroom environment does appear 'calmer' and corridors are 'safer' as less students are walking into each other when not fixated on their mobile,' says Glen Eira College Principal Sheereen Kindler.

According to students, it did not take long to adjust to the ban. Only one exception has been granted to date, for monitoring of medical conditions. Students eligible for the exception may only use their device for that specific purpose. The policy is strictly enforced and students who use their mobile phone are asked to hand it to the staff member who saw the breach. The phone is then logged and stored in the general office and collected by the student at the end of the day. The policy did not cost the school money to implement, and no changes to school operations were required. Since the policy was implemented, there has been no increase in parent phone calls to the school's office to pass messages to students.

To complement the policy, the college runs cyber safety and health and wellbeing programs to promote positive interactions and digital safety.

Anecdotally, the policy has helped to reduce students' access to inappropriate content, student mobile phone inattention and in-class mobile phone disruptions.

Learnings that can support other schools:

- Be on the front foot by engaging your community as soon as possible. Managing change is much easier when your community recognise that they have played a role in it
- Set expectations of acceptable behaviours in relation to the policy. Try to make things clear and simple. Everybody should be able to understand, at a quick glance, what is

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CASE STUDY 3

VALKSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Valkstone Primary School is a co-educational primary school located in Bentleigh East in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs with a student population of about 720 students. Approximately half of all students from Years 3 to 6 bring mobile phones to school.

The school has had a mobile phone policy in place since 2010 which states that 'students' mobile phones must be turned off and left in bags for the duration of the school day'. The school's mobile phone policy also states that the school does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged phones and that misuse or nuisance caused by student phones will be brought to the attention of the principal. Phones are also not to be used on camps and excursions. At Valkstone Primary School, all student lockers are undercover and located inside classrooms. Students are not permitted to stay in the classroom during recess or lunch breaks without supervision.

The policy was first introduced because phones were ringing in class and causing disruptions and leading students to be less active in the schoolyard. Before introducing the policy, input was sought from parents and the school council. The policy was announced through the school newsletter. At the start of each school year, students are reminded of the expectations on mobile phone use and all camp and excursion notices carry an explicit reminder that phones are not to be brought by students.

Parents and students have been supportive of the policy. The successful implementation was due to the school being proactive in introducing the policy as soon as issues arose and when very few of the students had a device. The school has not been approached for any exemptions and has not found the policy difficult to implement. With mobile phone interruptions and distractions appropriately managed and teachers modelling good behaviour by not using their phones (with exceptions made for roll marking and emergency management), this policy supports a focus on learning.



Valkstone Primary School does not have a 1-to-1 or a 'Bring Your Own Device' program but has put in place a number of measures to ensure students are equipped to be safe, responsible and ethical users of digital technologies. These include: acceptable use agreements which both students and parents sign at the beginning of each school year, participating in the [eSmart](#) program and [Click Against Hate](#) initiative, and inviting guest speakers from Victoria Police to talk to students about cyber safety and how to stay safe online. In 2019, the school also ran an after-school parent workshop on cyber safety and managing screen time in the home.

Learnings that can support other schools:

- Provide very clear communications about the intent of the policy and its operational
- Continue to re-visit the conversations with students and support them with responsible decision making with around technology use
- Implement with fidelity – set expectations among staff, students and the community and stick to them.