

MOBILE DEVICE USAGE POLICY

All Out of School Hours Care services have an obligation under the ‘My Time, Our Place’ framework to provide a safe environment in which school age children are able to engage in a range of play activities and join in a variety of cultural, artistic and leisure experiences. Such experiences allow children to interact with friends, practice social skills and solve problems.

The use of mobile phones in primary schools has recently been a subject of much debate and educational review- for example: Centre of Education Statistics and Evaluation (CESE) and Review into the non-education use of mobile devices NSW- report (2018). There is a growing conversation raised by teachers, parents, educators and the media about the effect of non-educational uses of mobile digital devices on student learning and social interaction including cyberbullying, exposure to harmful material and mental and physical health. The research and review have led education ministers from both NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania to introduce bans for the use of mobile devices in public primary schools.

We acknowledge the shared responsibility of supporting school policy and respect the collaborative partnerships we have formed with our feeder primary schools and families. Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) service will implement a mobile phone policy from 1st January 2021.

Educational jurisdictions in Queensland, Northern Territory and the ACT have not announced plans to ban the use of mobile devices. In South Australia the decision to ban mobile devices is left to individual principals of primary schools.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1	Relationships between educators and children	Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
5.1.2	Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children

RELATED POLICIES

Child Protection Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Children’s Belongings Policy Cyber Safety Policy Behaviour Guidance Bullying Policy	Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy Orientation of Families Policy Photograph Policy Privacy and Confidentiality Policy
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PURPOSE

To ensure compliance with the National Quality Standard and National Regulations we aim to provide an environment that is safe for all students at all times. The outcomes of the ‘My Time, Our Place’ Framework are reflected in our policy to ensure the Vacation Care environment is supporting children’s emotional wellbeing, physical safety and cyber safety.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and management of the Vacation Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We understand and accept that parents often provide a mobile device for their child/ren to provide personal security and safety whilst they travel to and from school. Additionally, some schools have a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy to provide opportunities for students to engage in the curriculum and therefore students *may* have a mobile device with them when they attend Vacation Care.

However, within our Service, mobile devices are **not** permitted to be utilised as we provide a balance of activities for students where a mobile device is not required. Some children with a

disability or health condition, may rely on the use of a mobile device for support needs will be exempt from this restriction. At times children's mobile phones may be used in conjunction with programming activities. Exemptions must be made by Management or the Approved Provider.

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- children, families and carers attending Vacation Care adhere to the policy
- any external communication is supervised and made using the Vacation Care registered phone
- parents/carers can access the Vacation Care phone number to make contact if required
- children do not use their mobile device whilst attending Vacation Care, including attending excursions and/or incursions, unless authorised by the Nominated Supervisor.
- the Vacation Care takes no responsibility for mobile devices that are brought to the Service (this includes if mobile device is lost or is damaged).
- all mobile devices must be clearly labelled with the child's name
- consultation will be made with management and parents of a child who requires access to a mobile phone due to their disability or medical condition.

Storage of mobile devices

If a child must bring a mobile device to Vacation Care for any reason, it will be stored in one of the ways listed below:

- stored in a locked cupboard within the Service and collected by parents/carers at the end of the day
- turned off and stored in the child's school bag

CONSEQUENCES

In the event of a child using their mobile device without permission, the child will be directed to place the device in a locked cupboard for the remainder of the session and returned to the parent/carer at the end of the day.

Should the child be accessing inappropriate content or using the camera on the device without permission, written notification will be provided to parents advising them of the incident. The letter may also outline future restrictions to be imposed on the student's eligibility to have their mobile phone at the Out of School Hours Service at any time.

Any intentional misuse of a mobile phone for the purpose of online bullying or image-based abuse will be investigated and reported to relevant child protection authorities such as the [eSafety Commissioner](#).

Educational jurisdictions Policy Information

New South Wales

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/strategies-and-reports/our-reports-and-reviews/mobile-devices-in-schools>

Tasmania

<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/2019/11/mobile-phone-ban-in-schools/>

Victoria

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/going-to-school/Pages/Mobile-phones-in-schools.aspx>

Western Australia

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/mobile-phones>

eSafety Commissioner

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/report/cyberbullying>

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government: Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2011). *My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner

Centre of Education Statistics and Evaluation (2018) *Impact of mobile digital devices in schools*

Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2020).

NSW Department of Education *Review into the non-education use of mobile devices in NSW*. (2018).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Victorian Department of Education. (2019).

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED: DECEMBER 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE: DECEMBER 2021
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