

Personal Communication Devices

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. All students receive a Chromebook device. This has eliminated any need for students Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs) and mobile phones to be used as a learning device in the classroom.

Students may not access their device or use technology connected to the device via physical wires, wireless tethering, Bluetooth, or hotspot. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones, smart watches, headphones, and speakers.

Melrose High School (MHS) is a safe place that provides an effective and accessible learning environment for every student and for school staff.

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.
- If 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 MHS is not responsible for loss or damage.

Procedures if a device is sighted/used:

- A staff member will direct the student to hand in their device to Student Engagement or a staff member, and it will be secured for the day.
- Student Engagement staff member informs parents and follows up with student.
- Student collects device from Student Engagement at end of day – from 3:10pm. Student not to leave class until the 3:10pm bell.
- If a student refuses to comply, the behaviour will be considered as noncompliance.
- Parents/Carers will be informed of the device use and repeated noncompliance.
- If the device is sighted/used repeatedly, 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.

Noncompliance may result in:

- 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.

Exemptions:

Parents/Carers can apply for an exemption by submitting an *ACT Education Directorate 'Personal Use of Communication Devices Exemption Request Form'* to the school or via email on:

frontoffice@melrosehs.act.edu.au. Sufficient supporting evidence will be requested via the exemption application and could include:

- 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 doctor, 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.
- 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.
- Other extenuating circumstances need to be supported with evidence or a statutory declaration outlining the clear need for the student to receive an exemption.

Alternative Communication:

- Alternative means of contact during the school day can be provided via email, Student Engagement or the front office.
- If parents wish to get an urgent message to their child during school hours, they can reach them via the front office on 61420700 or frontoffice@melrosehs.act.edu.au.
- Students may check their devices for messages at the conclusion of the school day, after the final school bell at 3:10pm.

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