



Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School St Albans South.



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFF

Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School Commitment Statement to Child Safety

A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people at our Catholic school

'The intention for this statement is to provide a central focus for child safety¹ at our Catholic school, built around a common understanding of the moral imperative and overarching commitments that underpin our drive for improvement and cultural change....

...Holy Eucharist Primary School together with the CECV will stay abreast of current legislation and will meet legislative duties to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our care, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government 2016), mandatory reporting, grooming, failure to disclose and failure to protect requirements².

¹As defined by the Victorian Government Special Gazette No. 2 (2016), 'children and young people' in this document refers to those children and young people enrolled as students in Catholic schools in Victoria.

²Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School Commitment Statement to Child Safety

EVIDENCE OF THIS OCCURRING AT HOLY EUCHARIST

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of all children and young people will be the primary focus of care and decision-making, with particular attention paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Children and young people are also provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

Rationale and Aims:

At Holy Eucharist Catholic Primary School the welfare and wellbeing of our pupils is paramount. The aim of the Mobile Phone Policy is to allow users to benefit from modern communication technologies, whilst promoting safe and appropriate practice through establishing clear and robust acceptable mobile user guidelines. This is achieved through balancing protection against potential misuse with the recognition that mobile phones are effective communication tools. It is recognised that it is the enhanced functions of many mobile phones that cause the most concern, offering distractions and disruption to the working day, and which are most susceptible to misuse - including the taking and distribution of indecent images, exploitation and bullying. However as it is difficult to detect specific usage, this policy refers to **ALL mobile communication devices**.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who have access to personal mobile phones on site. This includes staff, volunteers, committee members, children, young people, parents, carers, visitors and contractors. This list is not exhaustive.

This policy should also be read in relation to the following documentation:

- School's Commitment to Child Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Bullying Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Directive from Catholic Education Melbourne (CEM)

Code of conduct

A code of conduct is promoted with the aim of creating a cooperative workforce, where staff work as a team, have high values and respect each other; thus creating a strong morale and sense of commitment leading to increased productivity.

Our aim is therefore that all practitioners:

- Have a clear understanding of what constitutes misuse.
- Know how to minimise risk.
- Avoid putting themselves into compromising situations which could be misinterpreted and lead to possible allegations.
- Understand the need for professional boundaries and clear guidance regarding acceptable use.
- Are responsible for self-moderation of their own behaviours.
- Are aware of the importance of reporting concerns promptly.

It is fully recognised that imposing rigid regulations on the actions of others can be counterproductive. An agreement of trust is therefore promoted regarding the carrying and use of mobile phones within the setting, which is agreed to by all users:

Personal Mobiles - Staff

- Staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/texts during contact time with children. Emergency contact should be made via the school office.
- Staff should have their phones on silent or switched off and out of sight (e.g. in a drawer, handbag or pocket) during class time.
- Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are present (eg. classroom, playground).
- Use of phones (including receiving/sending texts and emails) should be limited to non-contact time when no children are present e.g. in office areas, staff room, empty classrooms.
- It is also advised that staff security protect access to functions of their phone.
- Should there be exceptional circumstances (e.g. acutely sick relative), then staff should make the Principal/Deputy aware of this and can have their phone in case of having to receive an emergency call.
- Staff are not at any time permitted to photograph or use recording equipment on their mobile phones, for example: to take recordings of children, or sharing images.
- Legitimate recordings and photographs should be captured using school equipment such as cameras and iPads.
- Staff should report any usage of mobile devices that causes them concern to the Principal/Deputy.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

We recognise that mobile phones provide a useful means of communication at out of school activities. However staff should ensure that:

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional (and will never include taking photographs of children).
- Mobile phones should not be used to make contact with parents during school trips – all relevant communications should be made via the school office.
- Where parents are accompanying trips they are informed not to make contact with other parents (via calls, text, email or social networking) during the trip or use their phone to take photographs of children.

Personal Mobiles - Pupils

We recognise that mobile phones are part of everyday life for many children and that they can play an important role in helping pupils to feel safe and secure. However we also recognise that they can prove a distraction in school and can provide a means of bullying or intimidating others. Therefore:

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones at school or on trips
- If in the rare event of a parent wishing for his/her child to bring a mobile phone to school to contact the parent after school:
 - The parent must discuss the issue first with their child's teacher.
 - The phone must be handed in, switched off, to the teacher first thing in the morning and collected from them by the child at home time (the phone is left at the owner's own risk).
- Mobile phones brought to school without permission will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

Where mobile phones are used in or out of school to bully or intimidate others, then the Principal/Deputy does have the power to intervene 'to such an extent as it is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site' – please refer to the Discipline/Bullying Policy.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors are expected to follow our mobile phone policy as it relates to staff whilst on the premises.

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore ask that parents' usage of mobile phones, whilst on the school site is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

We also allow parents to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

Implementation

The mobile phone policy will be shared with staff and volunteers as part of their induction. It will also be available to parents via the school office and website.

Ratified 9th August 2017

Reviewed 2017