

The Grange P – 12 College

Correspondence to:
PO Box 730 Werribee 3030

College Administration:

Deloraine Campus (7 – 12)
Deloraine Drive Hoppers Crossing 3029
Telephone: 9748 9166 Facsimile: 9749 4980
email: the.grange.p12@edumail.vic.gov.au

Callistemon Campus (P – 6)
Callistemon Drive Hoppers Crossing 3029
Telephone: 9748 6555 Facsimile: 9748 6777
internet: www.thegrange.vic.edu.au



24 November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

On 26 June 2019, the Minister for Education, the Hon. James Merlino MP, announced a new mobile phone policy for every government school in Victoria.

The new mobile phone policy comes into effect from Term 1, 2020, and requires that students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely put away during school hours.

The role of technology

We live in an exciting and technology-rich world and mobile phones are an important modern day communication tool. The school acknowledges that access to a mobile phone by children is important to many of our families in providing a sense of safety for their child while travelling to and from school, and for confirming or changing after school arrangements.

Managing the impact of mobile phones

Mobile phones often create disruptions and distractions in classrooms. Establishing a 'mobile phone free zone' helps teachers to establish and maintain a focused and productive teaching and learning environment.

Research has found that mobile phones can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school (e.g. accessing inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and unauthorised photography). Additionally, research shows that the unregulated presence of mobile phones in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion. A summary of recent, relevant research is available on the Department of Education and Training's website www.education.vic.gov.au

At recess and lunchtime our school also values the opportunity for students to communicate with each other face-to-face or be involved in activities rather than being focused on a device, particularly when using the device to engage with social media.

The new policy does acknowledge that technology is increasingly impacting the way in which students learn and communicate. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose.

For a small number of students with particular health needs, an exception to the policy may be granted. Please contact the school if you would like to discuss this.

I encourage each member of our school community to read the new policy which is available on our website. This policy outlines the school's expectations of staff, parents/carers, and students regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones by students at school.

Emergency situations

In the event of an emergency or if you need to contact your child, I ask that families contact the staff in the school office who will pass on a message as needed. The school acknowledges that this new policy may require some adjustments. As such, I ask for the support of all our families, staff and students in its implementation.

Key elements of the mobile phone policy:

- A new mobile phone policy comes into effect from Term 1, 2020.
- Students will be required to switch off and store phones securely from the first bell until the last bell each day.
- Families should contact the school office should you need to pass an urgent message to your children.

I know this is a significant change for students and an area that has potential for argument and conflict. In fact, only today, I visited a class where three students were using a mobile phone. This simply prevents the student from listening, concentrating and effectively engaging in the lesson.

The purpose of attending school is to learn to assist in gaining employment and becoming an effective citizen. The students, when questioned about their phones, all initially refused to hand them over. As you know, as parents, these types of issues have the potential to escalate quickly, leading to more serious issues and consequences. Fortunately, through reasonable discussion, each student agreed to my request. What I am pointing out is, as a Principal, I would prefer to work with parents and students on a co-operative basis regarding the Education Department's Mobile Phone Policy.

I am seeking the support of parents and students to acknowledge and follow the new Mobile Phone Policy for every government/state school in Victoria.

This Policy will be implemented at The Grange P-12 College, commencing Term 1 2020.

The College will hold a meeting for all parents one evening in February 2020 to outline why this policy is in place. We will also have a highly interesting guest speaker to outline concerns with overuse of social media and its associated risks for students.

Yours sincerely,



David Smillie
College Principal