



# POLICY

## Student Use of Personal Digital Devices

December 2024

### 1. Rationale

Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Ltd) is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community have access to and actively participate in a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment. This commitment extends to the use of Personal Digital Devices (PDDs), guided by the expectation that all members of the school community will engage in safe and responsible behaviour

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to all students within the CES Ltd system and governs the use of PDDs during school hours and school-related activities.

### 3. Policy Statement

In accordance with the Ministerial policy issued under Section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*, students are prohibited from using or accessing PDDs during school hours for any purpose, unless a specific exception has been granted.

This policy aims to:

- Foster a secure, focused and distraction-free environment for learning and teaching by minimising disruptions caused by PDDs and preventing inappropriate use, including cyberbullying
- Encourage increased opportunities for social interaction and physical activity during recess and lunch breaks
- Establish clear communication protocols between the school, students and parent/carers.

## 4. Personal Digital Device Use by Students

In compliance with the policy, the use of PDDs is prohibited at schools during school hours, including lunchtime and recess, unless a specific exception has been authorised by the Principal or delegated staff member.

If an exception is granted, the student must adhere strictly to the conditions specified and use the PDDs in a safe and responsible manner.

- PDDs must be turned off and securely stored during school hours or school-related activities as per the school's established procedures.
- PDDs brought to school are at the owner's risk, and the school accepts no liability for loss, theft, or damage.
- Staff are required to report and document all incidents of PDD misuse in accordance with their school's Learning Management System protocols.

### 4.1 Exceptions

A comprehensive list of exceptions is outlined in the Student Use of Personal Digital Devices Procedure. Exceptions may be granted by the Principal or delegated staff member when specific conditions are met and appropriately documented including:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Supporting medical needs.
- **Individual Learning Program Requirements:** Addressing specific educational accommodations or learning plans.
- **Risk Management:** Ensuring safety for students during offsite activities.

In specific circumstances, students may be permitted to access PDDs within the school environment, provided they adhere to expectations for acceptable and appropriate use.

### 4.2 Camps and Excursions

The use of PDDs is not allowed at camps, excursions, events, or activities unless they are necessary for a specific purpose or to manage risk. If PDD use is permitted, the rationale for the exception must be documented and approved by the Principal or delegated staff member.

### 4.3 Secure Storage

Schools will establish measures to securely store Personal Digital Devices (PDDs) in a way that aligns with the available on-site resources and capacity. Specific storage arrangements will be determined by the Principal, considering the context of the school environment.

### 4.4 School Level Response

Schools will address Personal Digital Device (PDD) misuse through a progressive and balanced approach that promotes fairness, accountability, and consistent outcomes for all students. The implementation of this approach is outlined in detail within the accompanying Procedures document.

In the first instance, the device is confiscated and returned at the end of the school day, with parents/carers notified. For a second breach, the PDD is confiscated and handed in each morning for five days. A third breach extends this requirement to twenty days, and the parent/carer will need to collect the PDD from school on the day the device was first confiscated.

Further violations are treated as sustained non-compliance, requiring a parent/carer meeting to determine additional consequences and strategies for improvement.

## 5. Definition

**Parents/Carers** – The natural parents, caregivers or legal guardians of a student currently enrolled.

**Personal Digital Devices (PDD)** – Electronic devices that enable communication, data access or media interaction through mobile telecommunications services or internet connectivity. This includes but is not limited to mobile phones, smartphones, headphones, smartwatches, portable gaming devices, and other emerging technologies such as wearable devices or voice-activated assistants capable of accessing wireless networks or cellular devices.

**Staff** – Teachers, support staff and contractors, whether employed directly, seconded or engaged by schools within the CES Ltd network

**Students** – Students enrolled in schools within the CES Ltd network

## 6. Legislation

This policy is mandated and supported by the following legislation:

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007
- Education and Training Reform Amendment 2010
- Education Training and Reform Act – Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No 1359
- Australian Education Act 2013
- Australian Education Regulation 2013
- Crimes Amendment (Bullying) Act 2011 ‘Brodie’s’ Law’
- The Copywrite Act 1968
- Information Privacy Act 2000

## 7. Duty of Care & Minimum Standards

CES Ltd is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people within its care. This commitment is articulated through the comprehensive Duty of Care and Child Safety Framework that guides the all operations of all Sandhurst Catholic Schools.

CES Ltd monitors its compliance with minimum standards in line with Ministerial Order No 1359 of the Education Training and Reform Act – Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in schools.

## 8. Related Policies

- Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy and Procedures
- Cyber Safety Policy and Procedures
- Information and Communication Technology Policy and Procedures
- Confiscation of Children and Young People Property Policy and Procedures

## 9. Review and Revision of Policy

Date	Description of Revision(s)
10 December 2024	New document approved by ELT