

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 26 June 2019

MOBILE PHONES TO BE BANNED NEXT YEAR IN ALL STATE SCHOOLS

Mobile phones will be banned for all students at Victorian state primary and secondary schools from Term 1 2020, to help reduce distraction, tackle cyber bullying and improve learning outcomes for students.

Minister for Education James Merlino today announced the reform at McKinnon Secondary College, which has seen the benefits of its mobile phone ban on student learning and social behaviour. Teachers at the school have reported that students are more focused during class and communicating more in the school yard.

According to the latest research from Headspace, around 53 per cent of young Australians have experienced cyberbullying.

Teachers and parents also frequently raise concerns about the use of mobile phones during school hours as a cause of constant distraction in classrooms. Rolling out a state-wide policy will provide consistency and certainty for parents, students and school communities.

Students will be required to switch off their phones and store them securely in lockers from the start of the school day until the final bell. When emergencies occur, parents or guardians can reach their child by calling the school.

The only exceptions to the ban will be where students use phones to monitor health conditions, or where teachers instruct students to bring their phone for a particular classroom activity. At all other times phones must be in lockers.

In Term 3 2019, the Department of Education and Training will work with principals to develop detailed advice and resources as schools prepare to introduce this policy next year. A review will be conducted at the end of 2020.

To address mental health and bullying, the Labor Government has invested \$51.2 million so every government secondary school campus will have a qualified mental health practitioner within the school, as well as \$65.5 million in student health and wellbeing, which includes anti-bullying and positive behaviour support.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"This will remove a major distraction from our classrooms, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn in a more focused, positive and supported environment."

"Half of all young people have experienced cyberbullying. By banning mobiles we can stop it at the school gate."

Quote attributable to the Principal of McKinnon Secondary School Pitsa Binnion

"Our students are more focussed learners in the classroom without this distraction and we have observed improved social connections, relationships and interactions in the school during lunchtime"

Quote attributable to psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

"All schools have a legal obligation to provide a safe environment in which to learn. This significant policy initiative is designed to ensure the well-being of young people while at school, free of distraction and potentially cyberbullying."

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