



Personal Electronic Device Statement

Context

St Patrick's College is a Catholic day and boarding school for boys in the Edmund Rice tradition, established in 1893. St Patrick's College is committed to providing a caring, supportive, and safe environment where every student has a place, a voice and their story is known. Edmund Rice Education Australia is committed to providing safe and supportive environments where all children and young people entrusted to our care are affirmed in their dignity and worth as a person.

Background

Edmund Rice Education Australia – Victorian Schools Limited (EREA-VSL), as St Patrick's College's governing authority, sets the policy framework for all EREA-VSL schools. These policies have been contextualised for St Patrick's College's particular school environment so that our policies reflect the needs of our students*.

*Student includes any person enrolled in the College, either as a day pupil or as a boarder.

Purpose

To create a focused and safe learning environment where students can engage fully with their education without the distractions posed by mobile phones or other IT devices.

Source of Obligation

In line with the changes to the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) St Patrick's College has made significant changes to the Personal Electronic Devices Policy. For the purposes of this policy Personal Electronic devices include mobile phones, iPods, MP3 players, iPads, Air Pods, Smart Watches and headphones.

Summary of Changes

As per Ministerial policy formally issued by the Minister for Education under section 5.2.1(2)(b) of the Education and training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), and updated in 2020, students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely stored while on school property. This encompasses all areas of the College including the private study space in the KRC and the Year 12 study Centre.

General Guidelines

- Mobile phones, and other IT devices, must be switched off and stored securely in lockers while on school property. This includes classes, assemblies, and any school event, unless otherwise directed by a teacher for educational purposes.
- Mobile phones are deemed to be securely stored if they are stored in lockers.
- All personal electronic devices owned by students are brought to schools at the owner's risk.

- Air pods, headphones, and ear buds may be stored in the student's pencil case and used only as directed for teaching and learning purposes.
- If parents or guardians need to contact students during school hours, they should do so through the school's main office, or student reception. Students may request permission to use their phone in the office in an emergency and can use the school phone at student services to make a call if required.
- Students with a medical condition requiring the use of a mobile phone should have this pre-approved by the school administration. Relevant documentation must be provided.
- Smart watches for the purposes of this policy, will be considered the same category as a "phone", if found using it for communication, internet, or game purposes while at school.

Consequences of Breach

If a student is seen to have a personal electronic device the following will take place:

- **First/Second Offense:** Electronic device (including mobile phone, smart watches, and Air Pods) will be confiscated, placed in an envelope which will be labelled with student's name and home room and handed into Student Services for collection at the end of the day (after 3:25pm).
 - The breach will be recorded in SIMON in student incidents.
 - Lunch detention to be issued.
- **Third Offense:** After 3 known infractions of this policy, electronic device (including mobile phone and Air Pods) will be confiscated, placed in an envelope which will be labelled with student's name and home room and handed into Student Services.
 - Communication with parents/guardian to be made regarding the collection of the device.
 - After-School Detention will be issued.
 - The breach will be recorded in SIMON in student incidents.
- **Continued Offenses:** Same guidelines as third offense, however discretion will be used to issue a Saturday detention if offenses continue.

Non-Compliance Guidelines

Given this policy has come into effect in all State Government and Catholic schools the College does not anticipate any significant compliance concerns. However, in the event of noncompliance the following will apply.

If a student refuses to relinquish their electronic device:

- The student will be requested to attend Student Services.
- A full day internal suspension will be issued for failure to respond to a reasonable request and disrespect towards a staff member.
- Parent/guardian to be communicated regarding the failure to meet the expectations of the college student code of conduct.

Responsibility

- **Ownership:** The school does not accept responsibility for loss, theft, or damage to mobile phones brought to school. Students bring their phones to school at their own risk.
- **Lockers:** Students are requested to store their phones in their lockers, which should be kept locked at all times.

After-School Activities

- Mobile phone use after school hours, such as during sports or extracurricular activities, is at the discretion of the supervising staff.

Status of Policy

This policy has been downloaded from CompliSpace, is endorsed by EREA-VSL and is reviewed annually.

Policy owner	St Patrick's College - Ballarat
Approving authority	Principal
Approval date	January 2025
Risk rating	HIGH
Date of next review	January 2026
Publication details	School website

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned TERA Board Framework	Child Safety
Related policies	Cyber Safety Policy ICT Acceptable Use Policy ICT Policy
Superseded documents	Replaces previous policy for MO870