



Student use of smart devices & screen time policy (revised 2025)

At Mansfield Steiner School we aim to educate students holistically without a reliance on the use of technology. Early childhood and primary school classes use no digital devices in their learning. Mansfield Steiner School is **not** anti-technology, but we advocate children being educated to use technology as a tool to enhance their creativity, and that these devices, apps, and programs are introduced at age-appropriate stages.

In alignment with Victorian Government legislation, all students must have their devices switched off and securely stored during school hours.

Primary students

If they must have a device, students are to leave it at the office for the entire duration of the school day. Primary students are not permitted to wear smartwatches at school. Contact with parents must occur via the front office.

Secondary students

Phones and smartwatches (used as phones) cannot be used at school. If a student needs contact with a parent (or vice versa) this is to be done via the front office. Smartwatches can be worn, but only to operate as a watch. If a student is found using a phone (including a smartwatch as a phone) while at school, they will be asked to hand it over, it will be stored at the office, and they can collect it at the end of the day. Parents will be notified by the student's guardian. If the use is repeated or deemed to be causing harm, then further conversations will be had between parents and the class Guardian.

Computer Use

MRSSK introduces computers into our classroom learning in Semester 2 of Year 7 and this is in the form of class sets of computers. Students are not required to access a computer from home until Year 8, when having the ability to do some word processing of essays and emailing teachers is expected.

All camps, excursions, and sporting trips are technology-free. This allows students to be more present, for the development of strong interpersonal skills, clear communication with the adults involved, and, in our experience, a greater enjoyment of the adventure.

Screen Time

Regular and excessive screen time (including gaming) is discouraged for all children, especially before Year 9. We recommend that parents carefully assess the age appropriateness of the content that their children are exposed to. To benefit fully from a Steiner education, children need every opportunity to develop their creative play, to learn to occupy themselves independently, to enjoy interacting with family and friends, and to learn



about the world through active exploration and participation. Children may require times of being 'bored' to turn towards these activities more easily.

When should I give my child a phone?

We understand the need for children to be contactable if plans change or a need arises. It is the strong encouragement of Mansfield Steiner School that this be a 'dumb' phone, or one with no internet accessibility.

We strongly suggest that parents wait until at least the conclusion of Year 10 to introduce smartphones and other smart devices.

Once your children have a smartphone, the issues accompanying the use of social media and online environments mean that managing the risks around this requires extensive intervention from parents. It is only after 16 years of age that students are developmentally ready to engage in conversations from an objective point of view, allowing them to make informed choices about how they present themselves in the online world. We encourage each class community to discuss and align itself with this recommendation for the benefit of our whole school community.