



Mobile Phone Policy

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences. In recent years schools have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature.

This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

Parents and students should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated. The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Executive Principal:

- the deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube
- bullying by text, image and email messaging
- the use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)
- students posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students
- general disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons
- students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.
- reposting or sharing images taken in school, against this policy

Dealing with breaches

Misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school behaviour policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse.

Students are aware that serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

The correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated and is not returned to the student at the end of a lesson. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely.

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff.

The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.

Rules for the Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in school by students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into school. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off and left in bags or lockers upon arrival at school
- The phone must be kept out of sight during the school day.
- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
- The security of phones will remain the student's responsibility, the school does not take responsibility for any damage, loss or theft of student phones.
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher

Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time

- Using a mobile phone outside school hours in such as way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfill the stated aim of providing ‘a clear moral and ethical lead’.
- Using images or video to undermine the good name of the school by identification or inference will be considered a violation of this policy

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Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's behaviour policy.

In addition:

- students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students or undermine the stability of the school in any way will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.
- If a phone is confiscated, school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated then :

- at the discretion of the teacher the mobile phone will be returned at the end of the lesson
- or the student will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of school day *from the Executive Principal or nominated senior member of staff.*
- the confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log on ISAMS for monitoring purposes
- school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- in the case of repeated or serious misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of the day or a week.
- where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Executive Principal may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

The Executive Principal or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence. If required

evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen. School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the safeguarding lead. The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Parents' Use of Mobile Phones on school site

Parents are not allowed to use their mobile phone camera facility whilst in the school building or site. School policy on this matter will be explained to parents and placed on the school website.

During group outings nominated staff will have access to a school mobile or IPAD which may be used for photographs or for contact purposes.

In the case of school productions parents / carers are permitted to take pictures of their own children in accordance with school protocols which strongly advise against the publication of any such photographs on social networking sites.

Staff use of personal devices

Staff are not permitted to use their own mobile phones or devices for contacting students, young people or those connected with the family of the student. Staff will be issued with a school phone where contact with students, parents or carers is required, for example a mobile on school trips or staff based landline in departments or school offices.

- Mobile phones and personally-owned devices will be switched off or switched to 'silent' mode and not used during teaching periods unless in emergency circumstances.
- Staff should only use mobile phones in designated areas such as the staff room away from children; not in open areas and within view of children regardless of the time of day.
- Staff should not use personal devices such as mobile phones or cameras to take photos or videos of students and will only use school provided equipment for this purpose.
- If a member of staff breaches the school policy then disciplinary action may be taken as appropriate.
- Staff should ensure that their phones are protected with PIN/access codes in case of loss or theft.
- Staff should not send and receive texts in classrooms or use camera phones at any time.
- Staff should never contact students from their personal mobile phone, or give their mobile phone number to students. If a member of staff needs to make telephone contact with a parent, a school telephone should be used.
- Staff should never store parents' or students' telephone or contact details on their mobile phone, as this allows the possibility of inappropriate contact.
- Staff should never send, or accept from anyone, texts or images that could be viewed as inappropriate.
- If a member of staff suspects a message, text or similar may contain inappropriate content it should not be opened but a senior member of staff, preferably the online safety coordinator or DSL should be contacted

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