Mobile Phones & Mobile Technology Procedures

Purpose of Procedures

Introduction

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. However, a rise in the number of incidents of misuse of mobile phones in school has created a situation where schools, in conjunction with their Governing Bodies, are implementing a specific set of policy guidelines covering mobile phone use in school.

Bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

Examples of misuse include:

- 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
- pupils 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

These Guidelines are intended to help a school make explicit the expectations of the school on student use of mobile phones and the restrictions which are placed on their use in school and on school grounds. The Guidelines sit alongside the Acceptable Use Policy for Internet Use which all student sign and is shared with parents and carers. They also give clear guidance to staff,
students and parents about the consequences for breaches of the Guidelines.

**Dealing with breaches of the Guidelines**

School, in agreement with the Governing Body, will agree the sanctions which will apply to the misuse of a mobile phone in school. It is expected that 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.

When needed school will identify a designated member of staff to deal with serious incidents of misuse, particularly where there has been a victim of Cyberbullying.

Students should be 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.

School will ensure all staff know 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 is present and what is found.

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

Students are allowed to carry their personal mobile phones in school and to use them responsibly in accordance with the following principles:

- Use of the mobile phone during lesson time will only be allowed with the instruction of the teacher and for the explicit purpose of supporting learning. Misuse of this privilege (using the phone for a non-curriculum purpose or any unacceptable use) will result in the withdrawal of the privilege and will result in the confiscation of the phone.

- At all other times the mobile phone will be switched off and it will be kept out of sight during lesson time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.

- Year 7 and Year 8 students must put away their mobile phone at 8.30am until 2.50pm. If seen by a member of staff it will be confiscated.

- Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 students must put away their phones at 8.30am. They are permitted to use their mobile phone
during morning break and their specific lunch. Use between lessons and on the corridor is strictly forbidden.

- No student may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held

- The security of phone will remain the student’s responsibility in all lessons including PE/gym lessons

- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a senior teacher.

There will be some exemptions:

- Headphones – due to some students using headphones for sensory reasons
- Mobile phones – for checking sugar levels

These exemptions should be discussed with the year team or the SEND department and then this will be communicated to all staff. These decisions should be respected by all students.

In Year 7 and 8 where a student needs to contact home they should go to the year team’s office at break or lunch to ask to make contact privately

**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.

- Taking photographs or videos or otherwise making images of pupils or members of staff without their express permission or using such photographs for other that the purpose agreed at the time the photograph was taken.

- Photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools and 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 to hand 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

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.
- if a phone is confiscated at school, under normal circumstances, it will be returned to the student at the end of the day and there will be a Faculty Detention
- for persistent or serious misuse there will be Head of Key Stage intervention
- if a student refuses to surrender their mobile phone (or headphones) for confiscation following misuse or unacceptable use, a senior staff will be alerted using the on-call system. There will be a minimum 1-day isolation. Parents will need to collect the phone at a pre-arranged time
- 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 and parents will be involved.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated, then:

- the student will be informed they can collect it from the teacher at the end of the day and they will receive a Faculty Detention

When there has been persistent misuse then:

- the student will be informed that the phone can be collected at the end of the school week from the Assistant/Deputy Head of ‘Student Support or their Head of Key Stage.
• this confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes and there will be a phone call home

• 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 misuse or refusal to hand over the phone (or headphones) when asked it 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 a week, a half term or longer.

• where a student persistently breaches the Guidelines, following a clear warning, the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these Guidelines unless these are being preserved as evidence.

• If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen

• Advice may be sought from the Safer Schools Officer and equipment may be passed over to them.

• School should consider whether an incident should be reported to the School Safeguarding Officer.

• 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.

Support for the Victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another student or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This should be discussed with the victim’s family or where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support should be obtained. This might be the designated Staff Welfare person or the victim’s Union.
To support the rehabilitation of a victim the following support may be offered in consultation with the victim and their family or support person. The school may:

- follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident.

- implement the institution’s ‘restorative practice’ procedures. Where the perpetrator agrees, participation in this process will be included as part of their reintegration programme following the incident.

- where ‘restorative practice’ does not take place then other avenues to support the victim should be tried e.g. Heads of Key Stage/pastoral support etc.

- school will also ensure that the perpetrator, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on the victim.

- senior staff should consider if an education programme should be implemented as part of PSHE or eSafety lessons

- where material has been posted online about a victim, school will provide support in getting the material removed either through discussion with the poster of the material or contact with the service provider.

**Emergencies**

In the case of an emergency, students must speak with their Form Tutor or Head of Key Stage before being given permission to phone home. If parents need to contact students urgently they should phone the School Office and a message will be relayed promptly and appropriately.

**Responsibility**

School accepts no responsibility whatsoever for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile phones. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile phones are properly insured.

These procedures are also available in the following formats: email, enlarged print version, VLE and other formats by arrangement.

*Originator: MMA*

*Reviewed: March 2021*

*Date of next review: March 2023*