

Achieving Success Together



# Mill Green School

## MOBILE PHONE ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Policy Status:	NON-STATUTORY
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## **Introduction and aims**

At Mill Green School we recognise that mobile phones, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers and support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour. This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Increase in incidents of cyberbullying
- Impact on mental health
- Over-reliance on mobile technology
- Distractions that can create an impact on learning in the classroom
- Reduced physical socialisation
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage

Smartphones, such as iPhones include 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. There has been an increase in the number of issues to do with online abuse via mobile phone technology and social media. As a result, students' well-being and mental health are being affected by this abuse of mobile phone technology.

We appreciate that there is a positive side to mobile phone technology and students often carry mobile phones so that they can contact parents before and after school. Beyond this, there is no need for students to use their mobile phones in school.

## **Positive factors relating to the use of mobile phones by students**

The school recognises that there are many positive factors relating to the use of mobile phones by students, for example, in increasing their safety on the journey to and from school, providing the potential for closer contact with Parents/Carers and between groups of friends. The school would encourage the use of mobile phones for such purposes but not during lesson times or when the user is distracted from the task in hand unless directed by a member of staff.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply) are responsible for enforcing this policy.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school, must alert a member of staff if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy. Adele Beresford Smith is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation

## **Use of mobile phones by staff**

Staff are expected to model expected behaviour and set a good example to the students at this school. Therefore, it is inappropriate for staff to make or receive calls or send texts, while learners are present/during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones is to be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staff room). There may be rare circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school in the case of acutely ill dependents or family members.

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01744 678760 as a point of emergency contact.

## **Data protection**

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data or any other confidential school information.

## **Safeguarding**

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Staff can use both Microsoft Teams and the school's Instagram and Twitter accounts to disseminate information that supports teaching and learning.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

## **Using personal mobiles for work purposes**

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their phones in an appropriate and professional manner
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office.

If a member of staff is required to use their mobile phone for work purposes **they must** use the prefix 67 or 141 to hide their number and not save any contact details for parents or carers.

### Work phones

A school phone will be provided to staff when they are supervising off-site trips. Staff must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

### Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents wishing to contact their son/daughter during the school day should contact the school office. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting the messages to students as well as offering pastoral support if it is needed.

We permit the appropriate use of photography or video devices by parents at school events and productions. We may question or challenge anyone where we suspect inappropriate use.

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is their own child.
- Using photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

### Use of mobile phones by pupils

*At Mill Green, we work closely with other professionals using a multi-agency approach and there may be occasions through advice and risk assessments where individuals are not permitted to bring mobile phones into school.*

Mill Green recognises that the use of mobile devices / smartphones are part of everyday life. Students at Mill Green are allowed to bring their mobile devices / smartphones into school, however they must hand it in to reception on arrival. The term mobile device includes, but is not limited to devices such as phones, tablets or portable games consoles that are internet enabled and/or have cameras or other recording facilities.

Students who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to their Pastoral Team or Adele Beresford-Smith (Pastoral Manager / DSL), who will make a phone available if appropriate.

- Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
- Students must not photograph or record staff or other students without their permission.
- Avoid sharing contact details with people you do not know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Do not share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
- Do not use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via Email, Text/messaging app or Social media
- Do not use your phone to send or receive anything criminal. For instance, 'sexting'.
- You must comply with a request by a member of staff to hand over your phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
- Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

Students who need to use their mobile phones after school should do so in a safe place within the school grounds and not on the main road, in line with police advice about mobiles being a major source of street crime.

### **Secure storage**

Mobile Phones owned by students at Mill Green are considered valuable items and are brought to school at the owner's (student's or parent/carer's) risk. Students are encouraged not to bring a mobile phone to school unless there is a compelling reason to do so.

Where students bring a mobile phone to school, Mill Green School will provide secure storage. Secure storage is storage that cannot be readily accessed by those without permission to do so. At Mill Green School, students are required to store their phones in the school office.

- The office will be open from 9 am daily for students to store their phones away
- Students will sign their phones in, place them in holder and hand them over to an office staff member
- The student's phone will be placed in a locked storage cupboard
- At 3:00 pm the office will be open for students to collect their phone and sign it out

### **Responsibility for mobile phones brought into school or taken on school activities**

Mobile devices in school are the student's responsibility. They should be switched off and kept at the school office. The school is unable to assume responsibility for the security of any mobile phone which is brought onto its premises. It cannot be held responsible for the cost of replacement of any phone which is lost, stolen or damaged. The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen transport, during school trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Pupils must secure their phones as much as possible, including passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal

phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

### **The misuse of mobile phones to harass another person or invade their privacy**

- The use of a mobile phone to send unsolicited and/or unpleasant communications may be regarded as an act of harassment. As such, the sender's behaviour may be considered to be an act of gross misconduct. Communications of this nature would include direct calls, voicemail messages, text messages, and email messages or photos.
- Sexting, sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams online.
- Any student who receives a mobile phone communication which they perceive to be an act of harassment should make every attempt to save it on their phone and report it to their parent/carer and/or a member of staff
- Where there is evidence that an unpleasant text message has been sent and received, the matter will be followed up with reference to the Bullying Policy, and/or Code of Conduct.

### **Breaches**

Any form of misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with as a breach of the student agreement and will be dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy.

The following are examples of misuse (the list is not exhaustive). 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- Refusing to switch a phone off or hand over the mobile device in line with this policy
- Sending inappropriate messages
- Uploading inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing, humiliating or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging
- 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
- 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
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages)
- 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
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, which may put them at additional risk.

## Dealing with Breaches

Misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school's 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 phones, in line with the permissions granted under sections 91 and 94 of the Education Inspections Act 2006. School staff have the power to search student's phones as set out in the DfE's guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation. The DfE Guidance allows the school to search a student's phone if there are reasons to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being used to commit an offence or cause personal injury. Where a mobile phone is confiscated, parents/carers will be contacted to collect the phone/device or with permission, returned via transport escorts at the end of the school day.

Mobile devices may be confiscated as part of investigations into behaviour/safeguarding incidents. Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting
- Upskirting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a member of staff. N.B. Parental permission is not required for this. 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 was found. This includes messages, emails, pictures, videos, and sound files. Where a mobile phone is confiscated, it will be stored in the safe in the main office and it will be recorded and kept securely.

Content on mobile devices will only be viewed in the presence of the student and only if appropriate. If inappropriate, dangerous, bullying or sexualised materials on phones are reported to us we will be informing parents, whose responsibility it is to monitor the use of mobile technologies and cameras by their children. The school will report on any safeguarding issues in the appropriate way and will report to the police any criminal or illegal activity.

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- Sexting
- Threats of violence or assault

- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

### **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, it will require a parent/carer to collect the phone from school or be given to a school transport escort to 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 exclusion. The school will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

### **Confiscation procedure**

If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- It will be held until a parent/carer collects the phone in person from the school or the bus escort collects it at the end of the day.
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log 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.
- Where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or a permanent ban.
- Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose the Headteacher 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 board.
- 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.

### **Refusal to hand over the device**

In the very rare incident that a student refuses to hand the teacher their mobile device, the teacher will not enter into any dispute with the student. The Teacher will speak with a member of SLT and a member of SLT will be sent to collect the phone. If the

student still refuses the student will be educated 'out of programme', supported by a member of staff, in line with the school Behaviour Policy. Persistent refusals to hand over their mobile device will be dealt with will mean that that student and their parents/carers will be asked for the device to remain at home. If the student continues to bring in their mobile phone and will not hand the device over, this will be dealt with in line with the school Behaviour Policy.

### **Responsibility**

All students are responsible for complying with the requirements of this policy and for reporting any breaches of the policy to a member of staff. If students have concerns about information or conduct on social media sites that are inappropriate, offensive, demeaning or could be seen to be harassment/bullying, this should be reported to their Pastoral teacher, Adele or a member of the Safeguarding Team immediately.

### **Monitoring and review**

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare.

When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- Feedback from parents and pupils
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

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