

Mill Green School

Use of Mobile Phones in School Policy

(Students, Staff and Visitors)

Policy Status:	**NON-STATUTORY**
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Purpose and Scope

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

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- 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

It is important to recognise that our mobile phone policy has not been created as a barrier to modern day life, but as a safeguarding measure for our whole school community.

For the purposes of this policy, mobile phone / smart device relates to technology such as smart phones, smart watches, smart rings, tablet computers and or smart / connected game consoles (portable).

Use of Mobile Phones / Smart Devices by Staff

Staff at Mill Green School are expected to model behavior and set a good example to young people at school. Therefore, it is inappropriate for staff to use mobile / smart devices including mobile phones or smart watches while young people are present. All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for enforcing this policy and equally, by following this policy are protected by its procedures.

Staff must secure any work issued mobile devices as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the device's functions.

Staff must also secure their personal devices which are brought onto the school premises or

during any school activity. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Volunteers, or anyone else otherwise engaged by the school will be made aware of this policy through the information given at Reception.

Personal Mobile Phones / Smart Devices

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their mobile or smart devices where young people are present / during contact time. Staff keeping their phone with them during contact times must ensure their phone is switched off and held in a secure area e.g. in their bag within a staff locker / classroom cupboard. Staff should NOT have their mobile phones, other than those issued by Mill Green School on their persons where young people are present / during contact time.

Use of personal mobile phones and smart devices is restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present such as the staff room and offices.

In circumstances where immediate contact is needed, then staff should let their dependents / their child's school know to call Reception on 01744 678760 as personal phones will be switched off during lessons.

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 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.
- Staff can use school iPads/ cameras to take pictures – not personal devices
- Staff can access website programmes that access data on external servers such as Dojo, Arbor and CPOMS though should never download content onto their personal devices.
- Staff must secure their phones or smart devices as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents or young people, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

Staff must not contact young people on the young person's personal devices, only ever contacting them through their parent/carer should this be required/necessary to do so.

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

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of young people, their work, or anything else which could identify a young person
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

Work Issued Phones and Smart Devices

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

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.

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

The Use of Mobile Phones by Young People

Mill Green School recognises that there are many positive factors relating to the use of mobile phones by young people, 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.

Young people are allowed to bring a mobile to school, though must hand it in upon arrival. This includes:

- Pupils travelling to school by themselves
- Pupils travelling by car by their parents/carers (preferably left with their parent when reaching school)
- Pupils travelling to school via School Transport
- Young carers who need to be contactable
- Personal phones/ tablets that are internet enabled and have cameras are not allowed on school trips during the day clubs (specific personal circumstances will be considered on a risk-assessed basis).

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.

Mobile phones must not be used during school hours, including break time or lunchtime, unless an exception has been granted. Where a young person has been granted an exception, the young person must use their mobile phone for the purpose for which the

exception was granted, and in a safe, ethical and responsible manner. Young people who need to contact parents during the course of the school day should speak to the Pastoral Team, Form Staff or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who will make a phone available if appropriate.

Whilst on school premises / activities:

- Smart devices including mobile phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
- Young people must not photograph or record staff or their peers
- Young people should avoid sharing contact details with people you do not know, and do not share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Young people should avoid sharing their phone passwords or access codes with anyone else.
- Young people must not use their mobile phone / device to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via Email, Text/messaging app or Social media
- Young people must not use their mobile phone / device to send or receive anything criminal. For instance, 'sexting'.
- Young people must comply with a request by a member of staff to hand over their mobile phone / smart device if it is used, seen or is heard. 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.

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 Pastoral Office.

- Mobile phones / devices should be handed in to the Pastoral Team on arrival to school
- The young person's phone will be placed in a secure phone store and locked in the Pastoral Office.
- Mobile phones / devices will be available to collect on leaving the building (at Pupil Entrance) at the end of the day, when leaving the building.

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

Mobile devices in school are the young person's responsibility. They should be switched off and kept in the Pastoral 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.

Young people 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 / Deputy Headteacher:

- 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
- Refusing to switch a phone off or 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
- 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.

Breaches

Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

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 not only to the confiscation of their mobile phones. If the offence is serious, it will be reported to the Police. If the mobile phone is found to be switched on during the day, the phone will be confiscated and only be returned to a parent/carer in person or via the school transport escort.

Mobile devices may be confiscated as part of investigations into behaviour/safeguarding incidents. A senior staff member will manage this confiscation in line with safeguarding policy. Parents will be contacted.

For clarity, school staff have the power to search young person's phones, as set out in the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. The DfE guidance allows schools to search a young person's phone if we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

If they are confiscated, parents/carers will be contacted to collect the phone/device

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

Sanctions

Young people 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:

- Young people 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.
- Young people 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 young person 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 young person 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 young person refuses to hand a member of staff their mobile phone or device, the member of staff will not enter into any dispute with the young person. The member of staff will speak with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and a member of SLT will be collect the phone. If the young person still refuses, they will be unable to enter the main body of the school and their parent will be required to attend school to collect the mobile phone / device.

Repeated incidents will result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone / device to school and escalation in line with the School Behaviour Policy.

Use of Mobile Phones by Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

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.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils on school grounds or school trips or when working with pupils
- Not posting any images/data about the school on social media without consent
- 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.

Parents or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

Monitoring Arrangements

Mill Green School is committed to ensuring this policy has a positive impact on our school community and in particular, on the welfare, education and behaviour of our young people. When reviewing the policy, we will take into account:

- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, St Helens Local Authority and other organisations including but not limited to Legislation and Statutory / non-statutory guidance
- Feedback from Parents and Young People
- Feedback from Staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding concerns

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher

Signed.....Date.....
(Headteacher)

Signed.....Date.....
(Chair of Governors)

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