

For many young people today, and their parents, a mobile phone is a necessary and essential part of life. When used creatively and responsibly the phone has the capacity to support a student with their learning. However, there are a rising number of incidents of misuse of mobile phones within schools that requires a specific set of policy guidelines regarding their use within our school.

Bullying and intimidation and harassment are sadly not new in society but within the Christian ethos of St Andrew's we will respond vigorously to any usage of a mobile phone to support such antisocial behaviours.

Examples of misuse we will respond to include:

- The deliberate engineering of situations where student's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass or intimidate by publishing on sites such as You Tube, Facebook or the like.
- Bullying by text, image or email messaging.
- 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 as to the risk to their personal reputations and/or with the 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 inappropriately in lessons.
- Students contacting parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of the school to deal with an incident is compromised.
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students where this might put them at additional risk.

These guidelines sit alongside the Acceptable Use Policy for the internet which is signed by parents and carers.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that they are used responsibly at school. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.
- 1.2 St Andrew's has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.
- 1.3 Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.
- 1.4 The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, residential and extra-curricular activities both within the school and off-site.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.
- 2.2 Our School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- 3.2 The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents/carers to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.
- 3.3 Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school. It is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.
- 3.4 Pupils are responsible for keeping the school informed if their mobile phone is lost or stolen to aid return if lost on the school site.
- 3.5 Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of inadvertently disrupting lessons.

4. Acceptable Uses

- 4.1 Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight whilst moving between lessons, and at break and lunchtime. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/carer specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the Year Leader. Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.
- 4.2 Mobile phones should not be used in any manner or place that is disruptive to the normal routine of the school (see below).
- 4.3 Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect against the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.
- 4.4 The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. Teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and pupils will have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these occasions' pupils may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

5. Unacceptable Uses

- 5.1 Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.
- 5.2 Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during lesson times unless given the express permission by the member of staff in charge.
- 5.3 Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.
- 5.4 It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

- 5.5 Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.
- 5.6 Should there be disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student will incur behaviour points and the mobile phone will be confiscated.
- 5.7 It is unacceptable to take a picture of a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and the mobile phone will be confiscated.
- 5.8 Mobile phones are not permitted to be used during break or lunchtimes.
- 5.9 Use of a mobile phone out of school hours to intimidate or harass staff or other students will be considered a breach of the Policy the same way as unacceptable use during school
- 5.10 Refusal to switch off and hand a mobile phone to a member of staff will be viewed as a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy.

6. Theft or damage

- 6.1 Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.
- 6.2 Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it in their bag, inside blazer pocket or locker when they arrive.
- 6.3 Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to student services.
- 6.4 The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.
- 6.5 The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.
- 6.6 It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.
- 6.7 Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used. In the event of a loss or theft parents/carers should arrange blocking of the phone.

7. Inappropriate conduct

- 7.1 Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to hand phones to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.
- 7.2 Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will be dealt with under the conduct and consequences policy action which may include fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- 7.3 Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action. Serious breaches may lead to a fixed term or permanent exclusion. [It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Police.] Police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the phone which breaks the terms of the Malicious Communications Act of 1988 or the Communications Act of 2003.
- 7.4 Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence.

8. Sanctions

- 8.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document face having their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested.
- 8.2 On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the Year Leader. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day and a record will be made of the incident and a consequence given by the teacher.
- 8.3 If a staff member suspects that the mobile phone has been used in an inappropriate manner the phone may be searched in line with DFE guidance. A staff member who finds an electronic device on a pupil after a search may examine and/or erase any data or files on the device, as long as they think there is a 'good reason' to do so. When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files, the staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to:
 - Cause harm
 - Disrupt teaching, or
 - Break the school rules
- 8.4 If inappropriate material is found on the device it is up to the staff member to decide whether they should:
 - Delete that material
 - Retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline) or
 - Report it to the police
- 8.5 Any further infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing their mobile phone to school.
- 8.6 As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident – of a serious nature - being referred to the Police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.
- 8.7 As set out in the previous section, serious breaches of this policy may lead to fixed term or a permanent exclusion from St Andrew's.

This Policy will be subject to regular review and updating in order to safeguard the students of St Andrew's effectively in the rapidly changing world of emerging technology. The School's commitment is to protect and enhance the learning environment for students and, at the same time, safeguard individuals from harm.