

Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy

1. Statement of intent:

1.1 At Whitworth Community High School, we recognise that mobile phones and other devices including smartphones and tablets, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff. However, we also recognise that such devices, when used in schools, pose inherent risks and may jeopardise the learning environment. Hence, student mobile phones should not be heard, seen or used in school.

2. Aims

2.1 Our policy aims to:

- Promote and set an example for safe and responsible use of mobile phones and devices.
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and devices for pupils, staff, parents, carers and volunteers.
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

2.2 This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones and devices in schools such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of loss, damage or theft
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

3. Legal framework

3.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

DfE (2024) Mobile phones in schools: guidance for schools on prohibiting the use of mobile phones throughout the school day

DfE (2018) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2018) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'

The Data Protection Act 2018

3.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

Anti-bullying Policy

Behaviour policy

Online safety Policy

Data Protection Policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

4. Key roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board has overall responsibility for:

The implementation of the policy and procedures.

Ensuring that the policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/nationality, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

Reviewing the policy every two years.

4.2 The headteacher has responsibility for:

Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

The day-to-day implementation and management of the policy.

5. Ownership and responsibility

5.1 The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises, on transport during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school. This is because the recommendation of the school is for students not to bring in any personal electronic devices and there is no requirement for mobile phones to be brought into school.

6. Personal electronic devices

6.1 Personal electronic devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- Mobile phones
- Personal digital assistants (PDAs)
- Handheld entertainment systems, e.g. video games, CD players, compact DVD players, MP3 players
- Portable internet devices, e.g. tablets, iPads
- Wireless handheld technologies or portable information technology systems, e.g. devices used for word processing, wireless internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording, and information transmitting/receiving/storing
- Smart watches or equivalent
- E-readers e.g. Kindles

7. Use of Mobile Phones and devices by Staff for Personal Reasons

7.1 Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) should not make or receive personal calls or messages while pupils are present. Use of mobile phones for personal reasons must be restricted to non-contact time and to areas of the school where pupils are not present, such as the staff work rooms.

8. Use of Mobile Phones and devices by Staff for Work Purposes

8.1 In some circumstances, it is appropriate for staff to choose to use their personal phone or device for work. Such circumstances may include but are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Completing registers
- Reading and responding to work emails

9. Staff Safeguarding

9.1 Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Staff are strongly advised to avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website to avoid unwanted contact by parents or pupils.

9.2 If staff choose to use their own mobile phone to take photographs of students e.g. to keep a record of successful school trips, they must ensure that another colleague is aware so as to ensure transparency. Any such images must be transferred to the school system e.g. WCHS Google Drive Mediastore as soon as possible and then deleted from the mobile phone.

9.3 If staff choose to use their mobile phone or device to take photographs or recordings of anything else which could identify a pupil e.g. an annotated whiteboard or a piece of student artwork, it is not necessary to make another colleague aware but the images must be deleted and transferred to school storage if necessary as soon as possible.

9.4 Staff must secure their personal phone or device and failure to do so could result in a data breach.

10. Staff Use of Work Phones

10.1 Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone for work purposes e.g. the support phone. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones and access to the phone must not be provided to others. 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. Staff must secure any work phone provided to them as failure to do so could result in a data breach.

11. Student Use of Mobile Phones

11.1 The recommendation of the school is for students not to bring in any personal electronic devices. Added to this, there is absolutely no requirement for personal electronic devices to be brought into school, and most certainly no need for them to be used during the school day. However, pupils are permitted to bring their phones, provided they are completely switched off (not in silent mode or aeroplane mode) and kept in bags (not blazer pockets). Phones must not be seen, heard, or used from the moment students step through the school gate at the bottom of the driveway until they leave at the bottom of the driveway.

11.2 Pupils' mobile phones should not be seen, heard or used, so as to avoid confiscation and sanctions. Confiscated devices will only be returned to a parent/carer or other nominated responsible adult who will have to come and collect it from the school. It may also lead to a sanction, as set out below.

- **Heard** - Behaviour point, device confiscated, parents to collect device
- **Seen** - Behaviour point, device confiscated, parents to collect device
- **Phone switched on** - Behaviour point, device confiscated, parents to collect device
- **Used** - Behaviour point, device confiscated, parents to collect device, isolation in Reflect
- **Refusal** to cooperate with sanctions - refer to further sanctions in behaviour policy e.g. increased time in Reflect, Suspension etc.

11.3 The decision to allow children to bring a phone lies with parents/carers, as does the responsibility for the device in the case of loss, theft or damage. It is particularly recommended that expensive devices are not brought into school as pupils may be involved in activities such as Physical Education (PE), which means they cannot always have their items with them.

11.4 Students needing to contact parents/carers may use the school telephone with a member of staff's permission.

11.5 If a phone is found to be turned on, e.g. during a search conducted by school staff, it will be confiscated.

11.6 Students will be electronically screened for mobile devices to comply with exam requirements, including for internal examinations such as mocks. Students caught taking mobile devices into examinations will face the sanctions as set out above. Additionally, the incident will also be reported to the relevant examination authority and the student will risk being disqualified from additional examinations.

11.7 If a mobile phone has sounded during the course of the school day, students in the vicinity may be searched or electronically screened to ascertain which student has the mobile phone that caused the disturbance. Any mobile phones found that are not switched off will be confiscated.

11.8 Students will be electronically screened for mobile phones on entry to the Reflect room.

11.9 Electronic screening and searching in other circumstances may also be undertaken as authorised by the Headteacher or DSL.

11.10 As students are not allowed to use their phones during the school day, Cyber bullying via personal electronic devices should not take place in school. It is expected that online issues such as bullying that happen beyond the school day are dealt with by parents/carers.

11.11 The use of mobile phones by students on school trips and residential is at the discretion of the school trip leader.

12. Use of Mobile Phones by Parents, Volunteers and Visitors

12.1 Parents, volunteers and visitors (including Governors and contractors) must:

- Not take pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child.
- Use any photographs or recordings for personal use only and not posting on social media without consent.
- Not use phones for personal reasons if they are undertaking voluntary work with students.

12.2 Parents and carers must contact the school office if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day and must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile phone.

12.3 Parents can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/>
- Childnet: <https://www.childnet.com/>