



MEADOW PARK SCHOOL

Mobile Phone Policy

Approved by:

LGB

Date: 23.09.24

Last reviewed on:

September 2024

Next review due by:

September 2025

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1. Introduction and Aims

At Meadow Park School we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers, visitors and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to the whole school behaviour policy and Child Protection & Safeguarding policy.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently 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.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

This Policy when reviewed annually will be reviewed by the school's governors and then ratified in line with the reviewing and monitoring of other policies such as the staff code of conduct and child protection policies.

4. Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

4.1 Personal Mobile Phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during contact time with students/ in their presence. This includes in and out of the classroom (i.e. during duties and in staff offices). Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom or offices without students).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- 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 02476 302580 (or in some instances a work mobile phone number) as a point of emergency contact.

4.2 Data Protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Bard).

Further information can be found within the school's data protection policy and ICT acceptable use policy available on the school's website: <https://meadowparkschool.com/key-information/policies/>

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. (*see Section 6. Within the Staff Code of Conduct Policy*)

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

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

Staff are able to use their phones for the purposes of necessary apps such as the CPOMS or Microsoft Authenticator in order to fulfil their roles and duties.

4.4 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:

- To issue homework, rewards or sanctions
- To use multi-factor authentication

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips (i.e. Communication between staff supervising groups or on different activities)
- Supervising residential visits (i.e. Communication between staff supervising groups or on different activities or with non-Meadow Park School Staff such as Dolymoch Activity instructors)
- Direct communication with partner agencies such as police, Children's Services or CAMHS in out-of-hour or time sensitive situations which would be impeded waiting for contact through the main office/ switchboard.
- Use of work-directed Apps such as the Microsoft Authenticator or CPOMS Authenticator.

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 students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office where available.

Contact with parents on personal devices would be considered a last option and only in the absence of a designated 'Trips phone' – the expectation would be that the personal number would be withheld (*141*) to maintain professional boundaries.

4.5 Work Phones

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.

Contact with students directly would be considered as a last option and only if for the purposes of safeguarding to ensure a student's safety and contact via a parent is unsuccessful.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. This would be considered a breach of the staff code of conduct and treated as such.

5. Use of Mobile Phones by Students

Students should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

We appreciate that mobile phones play a role in the safety of young people when travelling to and from school, but we also know that mobile phone use in school can lead to safeguarding concerns, a lack focus in lessons and reinforce social issues.

Consequently, Mobile phones and accompanying devices (e.g. Earphones/ AirPods etc) are NOT allowed to be used or seen on school site.

Parents have been informed that: Mobile phones and accompanying devices should 'not be used, seen or heard' whilst on school site. This includes breaktimes, lunchtimes, in classrooms and in the corridors. As soon as you walk through the school gates mobile phones and other devices should be in bags and not used at all.

If a mobile phone or accompanying device is seen, it will be confiscated and kept securely in the school's main office. *For Sanctions: Please refer to the School's Behaviour Policy*

5.1 Use of Smartwatches by Students

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

Smartwatches (deemed an accompanying device) for the purposes of communicating via text message/ phone call will also be subject to confiscation if it is believed that they are being used in lieu of a mobile phone device.

5.2 Exceptions for Special Circumstances and for Sixth-Form Students

The school may permit students to use a mobile phone in school, due to exceptional circumstances. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. To request such permission, students or parents/carers should contact Claire Yates – Head of Stellae House – Post 16.

Any students who are given permission must then adhere to the school's acceptable use agreement for mobile phone use (see appendix 1).

Sixth-form students are allowed access to their mobile phones during the school day, to reflect their increased independence and responsibility, but must not compromise our policy on the use of mobile phones for other students.

Therefore, they are only permitted to use their mobile phones out of sight of younger students within the sixth form centre outside of lesson times. Misuse of mobile phones by students in the sixth form will lead to sanctions according to our behaviour policy.

5.3 Sanctions

If a mobile device (including accompanying devices) is seen or heard, it will be confiscated (see Behaviour Policy) and a 15-minute detention issued. Students will be able to collect their device after they have completed the detention at the end of the school day.

Confiscation of a mobile phone or accompanying device can be requested by any member of staff at Meadow Park School. They will then be securely stored in the Main School Office until the end of the day (or in some instances a parent's collection).

If a student refuses to hand over their phone to their class teacher, resulting in a duty member of staff or Head of House having to intervene, then the sanction will increase to the following:

- If it is a student's 1st offence, a 15min DT is set and then their phone is returned upon completion.
 - If a student refuses to their class teacher and a duty member of staff has intervened to support, the DT will increase to 30 minutes.
- If it is a student's 2nd offence, a 15min DT is set and parents are required to collect.

- If a student refuses to their class teacher and a duty member of staff has to intervene and support, parents will have to collect and a 30min DT will be sat. NB: *(parents will be told to collect the phone from 3:45pm onwards- it will not be eligible for collection until the DT has been sat)*
- If it is a student's 3rd offence, a 15min DT is set and a Meeting with the students Head of House will be arranged to complete a Mobile Phone Behaviour Contract.
 - If a student refuses to their class teacher and a duty member of staff has to intervene and support, a phone contract will be put into place and a 30min DT will be sat.

Students who continue to refuse to hand over their phone or accompanying devices as set in this policy will face suspension.

Note: School retains the right to confiscate and search a student's phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DFE's Guidance on searching, Screening and confiscation](#). This would be in circumstances where staff believe that there is good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/ has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

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 (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- 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

School in each case will ensure that the sanctions given are clear, reasonable and proportionate – whilst considering whether:

- There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
- The student's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

6. Use of Mobile Phones by Parents/Carers, Volunteers and Visitors

Parents/carers, 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 students, unless it's at a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents/carers, 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. All visitors are given a leaflet 'Guidance for Visitors'.

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

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student

Parents/carers 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 their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, Theft or Damage

Students bringing mobile phones and/ or accompanying devices to school must ensure that the phones are securely stored in their bag/ coat and remain identifiable when not in use.

Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using 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 school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school. Signage in the main school reception area informs students and parents/carers of the disclaimer above and it is included in the acceptable use agreement for students.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the main school reception within a locked office/ secured access area. These will then be held by the school's office staff and will only be returned to the rightful owner or parent (as arranged).

Lost phones should be returned to the school's main office and handed over at reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner/ identify the owner of the phone to inform them of it being found.

8. Monitoring and Review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and students
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If you have any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Bernadette Pettman – Headteacher in a timely manner.

Appendix 1: Acceptable Use Agreement for students allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

- You may not use your mobile phone during lessons, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
- Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
- You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
- You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent.
- Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
- Don't share your phone's password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
- Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - Email
 - Text/messaging app
 - Social media
- Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.

Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.

Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.

Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.

You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a 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. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school.