

**Guidance on the use of mobile phones by students and young people**

Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many 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.

For many young people and adults the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their daily life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student’s learning experiences in school. Ownership of a mobile phone and using it appropriately is an important lesson in itself and encourages the development of independence and individual responsibility, something which is part of our aims as a school.

In recent years many schools have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

Parents and students should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated.

The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. ‘Misuse’ will be at the discretion of the Head of School:

* 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
* bullying by text, image and email messaging
* the 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 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 immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
* publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.
* contacting students by phone or by text message may also be considered misuse except in exceptional circumstances

**Rules for the Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in school by pupils**

**Students may choose to bring mobile phones into school. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:**

* Mobile phones must be switched off in all classes, corridors and other areas during teaching time. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
* The phone must be kept out of sight during lessons.
* Mobile phones should not be used during the school day unless agreed with the class tutor or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, **including break and lunchtimes**.
* No students may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
* The security of the phone will remain the student’s responsibility in all lessons including PE/gym lessons
* If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher
* Students are not allowed to charge their mobile phones in school

**Unacceptable use**

**The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school’s behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.**

* Photographing or filming staff or other pupils without their knowledge or permission
* Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
* Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or pupils by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites
* Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
* Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and pupils will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
* Using a mobile phone outside school hours in such as way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfil the stated aim of providing ‘a clear moral and ethical lead’.

**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 schools behaviour policy.

Students can expect both short and long term bans on bringing their phones to school should they be in breach of the rules for acceptable use. This decision may be taken by the class teacher and will be supported by the Senior Leadership team.

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.