



Mobile Phone Usage

RATIONALE

Mobile phones present schools with unique problems. On one hand, pupils and parents may rightly see them as a means of supporting pupils' safety on the way to and from school, especially in winter (the more so when pupils are participating in after-school activities). On the other hand they:

- ◆ are a proven serious distraction from pupils' work;
- ◆ cause an unacceptable waste of staff time when inappropriately and unnecessarily used;
- ◆ have been found to interfere with communication between home and school;
- ◆ have been used as a means of intimidating and bullying other pupils;
- ◆ are attractive to potential thieves;
- ◆ are prohibited by all Examination Boards and QCA in all tests and examinations, as a potential means of cheating;
- ◆ are still subject, by respected medical opinion, to the suspicion that they may damage children's long-term health (both users and those near them).

PURPOSES

It is the principal purpose of the school's policy to define a reasonable and workable approach to retaining the benefits to pupils of having mobile phones available to them and ensuring that none of the unacceptable consequences of their presence in school is endured.

GUIDELINES

1. Current arrangements for pupils and parents contacting each other are for parents or pupils sending urgent messages via the administration offices.
2. The school does not want pupils to have mobile phones on the premises and will accept **no** responsibility for their loss or damage however caused.
3. It is illegal to attempt to use a mobile phone capable of taking photographs for that purpose on school property. The use of this technology to bully, intimidate or otherwise harm others on the way to and from school is a serious offence.
4. The school deems it to be the responsibility of the pupil's parents, guardians or carers if their child brings a mobile phone into school. This view is endorsed by the Police.
5. If a parent or carer wishes their child to keep a mobile telephone with them, the following must be complied with:
 - (a) it must be kept out of sight at all times. Phones should be switched off and in students' bags;
 - (b) it is the parent or carer's responsibility to arrange with their child how they will meet these requirements and keep the mobile phone secure from interference by other pupils during the day (including assemblies, break and lunch periods, P.E. lessons and other occasions when they may be separated from their school bags etc.);
 - (c) a mobile phone must never be left in a coat, or in the P.E. changing rooms.
6. Alternatively, the child may ask for the phone to be kept for safe keeping in the Reception area. In this case the phone must be handed in by the child, in a sealed envelope brought from home and clearly noting the pupil's name and Form Group. It must be handed in before Registration and collected at the end of the day.
7. Any mobile phone found to be in school when the pupil has not fully complied with these requirements will be confiscated. The member of staff confiscating it will

place the phone in an envelope clearly marked with the pupil name and Form Group. The envelope will be sealed and taken to the main school reception where the member of staff will complete the mobile phone log-book identifying how the phone should be returned to the pupil. In all but exceptional circumstances the arrangement should be that a parent or carer needs to collect the phone, the phone should not be returned to the pupil until the end of the day at the earliest.

A member of staff will telephone the parent or carer asking them to collect the mobile phone from school. On collection the parent or carer will be asked to sign and date the mobile phone log-book accordingly.

8. Should a mobile phone be mislaid or stolen the child and/or parent or carer is responsible for informing the relevant telephone company and liaising with the Police (if appropriate). The response of school staff involved is based on current guidance from the Police, who do not treat mobile phone theft as a high priority. Theft is repugnant to all members of the school community but is best dealt with by prevention. Reasonable efforts will be made to locate the phone and (if applicable) to identify the thief but the similarity of many mobile phones and difficulty in identifying them means that detailed searches are likely to be a waste of staff time.

CONCLUSION

It is essential that all partners in the school community help us strike an appropriate balance between benefits and disadvantages posed by mobile phones by following all aspects of this Policy.