

# Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones/Devices

## **This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

The school's e-Safety Policy  
The school's Behaviour Policy  
The school's Anti-Bullying Policy  
The school's Safeguarding Policy

## **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 mobile phones 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 Westwood College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers with 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, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus 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 Personal safety and security
- 2.3 The school accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. 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 the responsibility of parents/carers to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.

## **4 Acceptable Uses**

- 4.1** Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons and while moving between lessons.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, their first point of communication should be made by telephoning the school office. This is so that parents make contact with the school first so that 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 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. In the future, teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and students may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these occasions students may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. However, the use of personal mobile phones in one lesson does not mean that students then have permission to use mobile phones in all lessons.

## **5 Unacceptable Uses**

- 5.1** Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones/smart watches/IPods or tablets 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. Mobile phones can only be used by a student in the event of an emergency and after permission has been given by a member of staff.
- 5.2** The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones, smart watches, tablets or I-Pods.
- 5.3** Mobile phones, smart watches, tablets or I-Pods must not disrupt classroom lessons with ring tones, music or beeping.
- 5.4** 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.
- 5.5** Students are not permitted to join together as a group against another student and use their mobile phones or other devices 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 or other technology to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.
- 5.6** Students should have their phones secure inside bags prior to entering the changing rooms. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be out of bags in changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms. Mobile phones are not to be taken out of

bags or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school. PE staff will confiscate any mobile phones found out of school bags and in use in these areas immediately. The mobile phone will then be need to be collected by the student from the school Reception at the end of the day.

- 5.7 Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone/ other mobile device (including a smart watch), the student responsible may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Headteacher and outlined in the behaviour policy. This may include a mobile phone ban in school.
- 5.8 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.

## 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 when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.
- 6.3 Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.
- 6.4 **Students bring mobile phones and other mobile devices to school at their own risk.** 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.

## 7 Inappropriate conduct

- 7.1 Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to leave their mobile phones, switched off, in their bags, before entering the exam hall or they should 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 face disciplinary action.
- 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. **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.**

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. **As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.**

## **8 Sanctions**

- 8.1 Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could 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 Parents will be notified and the student will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer's consent. If a parent/carer is unable to attend the school they are permitted to phone and give verbal consent for their child to collect the phone and must speak to a member of the pastoral or management team. The incident will be recorded.
- 8.3 Any further infringements of the mobile phone code of conduct may result in a ban on bringing a mobile phone to school.
- 8.4 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.

**ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS ON: November 2017**

**POLICY REVIEW DATE: November 2019**