



Malmesbury School

Mobile Phone (and other such electronic devices) Policy

1. Introduction

Malmesbury School recognises and accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. Many students travel alone on public transport, commute long distances to school and/or take part in extra-curricular activities outside of normal school hours. It is also acknowledged that, for many young people, the ownership of a mobile phone is considered to be a necessary and vital part of their social life.

Mobile phones, and in particular the new generation of smartphones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as the 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 access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. When used creatively and responsibly, the smartphone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences. However, the consequences of misuse can be serious.

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

- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass or 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);
- The posting of material on social networking sites with no thought to the risks to 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;
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with it is compromised;
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

These guidelines outline the expectations of the school on student use of mobile phones. They also give clear guidance to staff, students and parents about the consequences of breaches of these guidelines.

2. Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- Students should be advised that if they do bring mobile phones (or other such electronic devices) to school, they do so at their own risk. The security of the phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons, including PE/Games. All pupils have access to a locker and, additionally, phones can be handed in at the school office for safe-keeping if marked with the student's name and form.
- Students are discouraged from bringing expensive items to school if it is not necessary to do so. A basic and inexpensive pay-as-you-go mobile phone is advised as the most appropriate.





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- In line with police advice, students are advised for personal safety reasons not to display expensive or desirable electronic items in public places, for example on the journey to and from school.
- Students will be educated about mobile technologies through PSHE and pastoral programmes. Teachers will be vigilant for the misuse of technology in bullying or as part of classroom disruption.
- We encourage parents/carers to talk to their child about appropriate use and security.

3. Acceptable Use

Students are allowed to carry their personal mobile phones in school and to use them responsibly in accordance with the following principles:

- 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 mode.
- Use of the mobile phone during a lesson may be allowed with the agreement of the teacher for the explicit purpose of supporting learning.
- Parents/carers are reminded that, in cases of emergency, the student support office remains the most appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.
- Students are permitted to use their mobile phones for the purpose of playing games at break-time and lunch time.
- Students should protect their phone numbers. This can help to prevent 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.
- Sixth Formers are permitted to use their mobile phone discreetly during non-teaching time in the Sixth Form Common Room. They are still bound by the rules on unacceptable use outlined below. The camera function is prohibited.

4. Unacceptable Use

Any use of a mobile phone outside of the principles outlined above will be deemed unacceptable and can result in sanctions. The school will also 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 students without their knowledge or permission.
- Posting photographs or other material about a member of staff or another student online without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and other similar areas.
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites.
- Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action.
- Refusing to switch a phone off or hand over a phone at the request of a member of staff.
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff or students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace or offend another person. As such, in cases of serious misconduct, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.
- Any student caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessment will face disciplinary action.
- For public examinations, mobile phones are not allowed in the exam room. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the rules of the exam board.
- For all other examinations, mobile phones should be turned off if they are to be carried.





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- Students in the on-call room or in the bungalow are required to hand in their mobile phones for safe keeping. These will be returned to students at the end of their stay in the room, unless other factors make it inappropriate. Should other factors render it necessary, the procedure for confiscation will be followed.

5. Theft or Damage

- It is advised that mobile phones are insured and marked for easy identification and that a record is kept of the device's serial number.
- Students are encouraged to keep mobile phones locked in lockers.
- Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to the student support office.
- It is strongly advised that students use passwords/PIN numbers to ensure that unauthorised calls cannot be made from their phones in the event of them being stolen. Passwords/PIN numbers must be kept confidential.
- Lost and stolen mobile phones can be blocked across all networks by contacting the provider with the serial number of the device.

6. Sanctions

- Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phone confiscated by a member of staff.
- On the first infringement of this policy, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the student support office. A verbal report would be given and the student would be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day. A record will be made of the incident.
- On the occasion of a first confiscation, but where there are aggravating factors such as rudeness on the part of the student, the imposition of an additional sanction will be considered.
- On the second infringement, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the student support office, where it would be securely stored. Parents/carers will be informed of the situation and a request will be made that the phone is collected by a parent or carer.
- On the third or subsequent infringement, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to the student support office, where it would be securely stored. Parents/carers will be notified and an after school detention with a member of SLT will be imposed. Parents and the student will be given 24 hours' notice of this detention. The student's repeated infringements will be discussed with the parent and a decision will be made by the school whether or not to withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the phone into school.
- If the parent or carer fails to collect a mobile phone after a period of seven days, it will be returned to the student with a warning of the implications of a further breach of rules.
- For repeated offences, students may be required to hand in their phone at the beginning of the day and collect it at the end of the day for various periods of time.
- Any infringement which involves the disruption of learning or teaching may also be punished with an after-school detention, at the discretion of the teacher.
- If a mobile phone is on a desk, stowed in a student's clothing other than in a pocket or is otherwise obviously apparent in a lesson, during lesson time or during a detention, the student will be given the opportunity to put the mobile phone in their bag. If the student refuses to do so, or if it is taken out of the bag again, it will be confiscated by the teacher and handed to Student Support with a note of the student's name. Further action will correspond to the number of times the phone has already been confiscated, as described above.
- Serious breaches in conduct, particularly involving bullying, will be dealt with by a Senior Pastoral Leader or another suitable senior member of staff. In such cases, parents/carers will always be notified. The sanctions for more serious incidents will vary and will depend on the circumstances, the offence, and the degree to which trust has been breached.





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- Where the person conducting the search finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules or that they reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, they may examine any data or files on the device where there is a good reason to do so. They may also delete data or files if they think there is a good reason to do so, unless they are going to give the device to the police. The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be considered at this point.
- If a staff member does not find any material that they suspect is evidence in relation to an offence, and decides not to give the device to the police, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device or to retain the as evidence of a breach of school discipline.
- If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved. Victims will be encouraged to keep screenshots for this purpose.
- Refusal to comply with the sanctions included in this policy will be treated as refusal to follow instruction and may result in fixed term exclusion.

7. Support for the Victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another student or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This should be discussed with the victim's family or, where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support should be obtained.

To support the rehabilitation of a victim, the following support may be offered:

- Follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident.
- Other avenues to support the victim, such as the school counsellor will be suggested.
- The school will ensure that the perpetrator, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on their victim.
- The school will ensure a fully documented case history of the incident is recorded and appropriate notes are placed on perpetrator's files.
- Where material has been posted online about a victim, the school will provide support in getting material removed, either through discussion with the poster of the material or contact with the service provider.

8. Trips and Visits

- Mobile phones can be very useful on a school trip. This may be for: maintaining communication with parents; use as an emergency contact; taking photographs because many students no longer use a camera.
- School rules and this policy remain extant on trips and visits.
- Visit leaders must ensure that they consider the students' use of mobile phones on their trip and make reference to this in any risk assessment.
- Students must be briefed about the rules prior to any trip and the details must also be communicated to parents via a letter or parents' meeting as appropriate.

The mobile policy should be read in conjunction with *Searching, Screening and Confiscation Advice for Headteachers, school staff and governing bodies* January 2018 published by the DfE.

This Policy will be reviewed in 2022

March 2019

