

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION & AIMS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STUDENTS IN YEARS 7-11

USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY SIXTH FORMERS

USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STAFF

LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

APPENDIX 1 Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Agreement for Students

APPENDIX 2 Mobile Phone Information Slip for Visitor

1 INTRODUCTION & AIMS

1.1 Aims

At The Laurels School, we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use;
- set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents and volunteers; and
- support the school's other policies, Safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti-bullying

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

This Policy addresses mobile phone use for pupils in Years 7-11 and then separately addresses Sixth Form use of mobile phones.

1.2 Rationale

Aside from the safeguarding issue, the rationale for this policy is that it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a child's academic year. This is according to research by Louis-Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics.

'Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance' found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4%. The economists cite that this is the *'equivalent of adding five days to the school year'*. According to Beland and Murphy, a phone ban produced improvements in test scores among students, with the lowest-achieving students gaining twice as much as average students.

The ban had a greater positive impact on students with special education needs and those eligible for free school meals, while having no discernible effect on high achievers. *"We found that not only did student achievement improve, but also that low-achieving and low-income students gained the most. We found the impact of banning phones for these students was equivalent to an additional hour a week in school, or to increasing the school year by five days."*

2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for 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 Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3 USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STUDENTS IN YEARS 7-11

3.1 Student Use

The school recognises that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:

- All students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times.
- For students in Years 7-11 a signed agreement (Appendix 1) must be in place between the parent/carer and the school;
- Students must place their phone in the form mobile phone Perspex cases at registration, for their form teacher to monitor. For any student arriving after registration, this process must be undertaken on arrival at Reception.
- For the avoidance of doubt, students in Years 7-11 must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones, earbuds and air-pods anywhere in school during the school day. They must also not have in their possession a phone after registration. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the students enter the school grounds and ends once the children leave the site. Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extra- curricular clubs.

3.2 Designated areas and medical exemptions

The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones in selected areas given individual circumstances. She will also consider exemptions for specific students with serious medical conditions who require access to their phone to manage the condition. A doctor's confirmation may be required.

4 USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY SIXTH FORMERS

Sixth Formers may use their phone before/after school, during break and lunchtime in designated Sixth Form areas only. Phones, headphones or

earbuds etc. are not allowed to be used or seen in the corridors or any of the main school areas shared with other year groups, at any time of the day.

Sixth Formers may not use mobile phone during lessons or in supervised study, unless the teacher specifically allows it as a teaching/learning tool, in which case the teacher will provide permission on a lesson-by-lesson basis.

Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') during lessons and placed in school bags/pockets. They should not be left out on desks or left charging.

When talking to a member of staff on the school site, sixth formers must immediately put phones away and/or remove headphones/earbuds etc.

Sixth Formers may not use their mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.

Sixth formers must not take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students; and must not use their mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via email, text/messaging app or social media.

Sixth Formers must not use their phones to send, receive, view or share anything that may be harmful, derogatory or criminal. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how students' mobile phones even when they are not in school.

Students must not 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.

Students must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or turn 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 students have a mobile phone, they will be asked to store this appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the exam room. Bringing a phone into the exam room can result in the student's exam being declared invalid.

We expect sixth formers to take responsibility for the safe and considerate use of their mobile phone. However, if at any point a student fails to follow the above expectations, a member of staff can confiscate the phone/headphones/earbuds. These will be placed in Student Services to be picked up by a parent/carer/student at the school's discretion.

5 SANCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

5.1 Sanctions

Any student found using or known to have used their mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones, earbuds and air-pods anywhere in school during the school day in contravention of this policy will have any of the above device confiscated. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff.

Once confiscated, the phone will be passed to Reception for safe keeping and the Director for Behaviour for Learning will contact the parents before the end of the day to ask them to come in to collect it, normally the following day (or later if this is not convenient for them).

Confiscated phones will not be handed back to students.

If the student is a repeat offender the school will request a parent/carer to come in and collect the phone from the school after two weeks.

Where a serious misuse of a phone is discovered, the school reserves the right to withdraw permission for that student to bring her phone to school for a specified period of time.

If we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, staff have the power to search children's phones, as set out in our Behaviour Policy. This will always be done by a member of the Senior Leadership Team with a member of the pastoral team.

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
- 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

6 USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STAFF

6.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present. 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 departmental offices and the staff room).

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- For two-factor authentication to access the school MIS.

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

6.2 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

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

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student. If it is

necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

6.3 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 are not limited to:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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.

Equipment for direct communication between the senior leadership team during the school day will be provided by the school.

6.4 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:

- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

6.5 Staff Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

7 LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely in our mobile phone boxes for each form throughout the school day.

Students must secure their 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 GDPR breaches.

Where a mobile phone is brought into school, it is entirely at the student's and parents' own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for the loss, theft or damage of any phone or electronic device brought into school. (Ref: Section 94, Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that *'where a teacher disciplines a pupil by confiscating an item, neither the teacher nor the school will be liable for any loss or damage to that item'*).

Equally, there is no statutory liability on schools for items that go missing in other ways.

Confiscated phones will be stored at Reception in a secure location and must be signed out by parent/carer upon return.

Phones that have been 'found' unattended in school will be handed in to the Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Document Title	Mobile Phone Policy
Version	1.0
Date	Autumn Term 2023
Author	Linda Sanders
Approved by head teacher	Yes
Approved by SLT	Yes
Approved by Safeguarding Governor	Yes
Next Review Date	Autumn Term 2025

Appendix I: Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Agreement for Parents/Carers and Students in Years 7-11

The following rules must be obeyed if a student bring their mobile phone to school:

1. The phone must be **completely switched off** (not just put on 'silent') and must be placed in the Perspex Phone Boxes at morning registration or on arrival at school if this occurs after registration.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, students may not use their mobile phone during lessons or activities, or in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students.
3. Students cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students.
4. Students should avoid sharing their contact details with people they don't know, and students should not share other people's contact details without their consent.
5. Students must not share their phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
6. Students must not use their mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
7. Students must not use their phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
8. School rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how students use their mobile phone **even when they are not in school**.
9. Students must not 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.
10. Students 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.
11. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If students have a mobile phone, they will be asked to store this appropriately, or pass it to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in the student's exam being declared invalid.

This is understood and we agree to the above.

Name of Parent/Carer: _____

Name of Student: _____

Appendix 2: Mobile phone information slip for visitors

Use of mobile phones in our school

- Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds. Please do not use phones where children are present. If you must use your phone, you may do so in a staff office.
- Do not take photos or recordings of children or staff
- Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with children

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our Mobile Phone Policy is available on the school website.