



Sandbach High School & College

MOBILE PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

Mobile phones and electronic devices now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, office applications and 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.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone or electronic device is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly they have great potential to support a student's learning experiences. In recent years we have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone or electronic devices use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element of bullying.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however bullying using a mobile phone or electronic device represents a new challenge for schools to manage. Parents/Carers and students should be clear that misuse of mobile phones and electronic devices will not be tolerated. The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- 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 Instagram or Snapchat
- Bullying by text, image and email messaging
- 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 staff, other students or visitors to the school
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing mobile phone or electronic devices in lessons
- Students phoning parents/carers 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 or who are not allowed to be part of any school publicity. This may put them at additional risk.

Misuse of a mobile phone or electronic device will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the school behaviour policy, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse. Students are aware that serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone or electronic devices, communication with parents/carers and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

Rules for the Acceptable Use of a Mobile Phone or Electronic Device in School by Students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones or electronic devices into school. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following restrictions, namely:

- The mobile phones or electronic device must be left in their school bag or in their locker when on the school premises. They must be switched off during these times. It is not acceptable for them merely to be put on silent
- No student may take a mobile phone or electronic device into a room where examinations are being held
- The security of the mobile phone or electronic device will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons, including PE lessons. In PE lessons, for example, there will no longer be a 'safe' box for mobile phones or electronic devices. Students will be encouraged to place it in their locker for safe keeping.
- Mobile phones or electronic devices may be taken on school trips or extra-curricular activities but if an accompanying member of staff feels the phone has been used inappropriately (see below) then the content on the device (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher.
- If a child is attending an after school club, it is the discretion of the teacher if the phone can be turned on.

Unacceptable Use

Whatever the circumstances, the school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone or electronic device 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
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and 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
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone or electronic device outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff or other students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school
- Using a mobile phone or electronic device outside of school hours in such a 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/carers are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the schools behaviour policy. In addition:

- Students and their parents/carers should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the mobile phone or electronic device (including SIM card) where the guidelines have been breached.
- Using the device outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students or undermine the stability of the school in any way will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
- If a device is confiscated, school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Students and parents/carers should be aware that the Police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of a mobile phone or electronic device where criminal activity is suspected
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone or electronic device is confiscated then the school will endeavour to contact the parent/cares to inform them it has been confiscated. It is then the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that safeguarding measures are put in place for their child both to and from school and out of school hours. The confiscation procedure is:

- On the **FIRST** occasion the device will be confiscated for **TWO SCHOOL DAYS** – the student will be able to collect it from main reception when the confiscation period ends
On **SUBSEQUENT** occasions the device will be confiscated for **5 SCHOOL DAYS**- the student will be able to collect it from main reception when the confiscation period ends. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WEEKENDS AND BANK HOLIDAYS DO NOT COUNT AS SCHOOL DAYS.**
- If a student continues to abuse the policy, permission to have a mobile phone or electronic device in school **WILL BE REMOVED**. The mobile phone or electronic device will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the item.
- The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- We will seek to ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- If a device has been confiscated and a parent/carer needs to pass an urgent message to their daughter then the school receptionist will take the message and make sure it is passed on. The telephone number to contact school is **01270 765031**. Should a student need to ring home, for educational reasons, then the school receptions will facilitate this.

Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the co-operation of parents/carers in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence
- If required evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen. We will consider whether an incident should be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.