

Mobile Phone Policy



Approved by:

Full Governing Body

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Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smart phones now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. Through this policy we aim to encourage our students to be **discerning** and **considerate** in their use of mobile phones.

These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, twitter and blogging sites. For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smart phone has great potential to support a student's learning experiences.

Parents and students should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated.

The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. The definition of 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Head:

- 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 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).
- 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 or other students.
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons.
- students phoning parents 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, where this may put them at additional risk.

Dealing with breaches

Misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the college 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, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from college. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police

Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff. The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.

Rules for the Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in college by students

Students are allowed to bring mobile phones into college. If they choose to do so it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- The phone must be kept in a student's bag during lessons. The phone is not allowed to be in a pocket or on the student's person.
- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the college day, including break and lunchtimes, and remain off whilst students are on the college premises. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent or pager mode.
- At the end of the college day the phone can only be used once the student has left the college site.
- In an examination setting the phone must be switched off and in the student's bag
- The security of a phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE lessons
- If asked to do so, content on the phone (e.g. messages, emails, pictures, videos, sound files) will be shown to a teacher

Unacceptable use

The college will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the college's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

- Photographing, filming or recording 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 refusing to hand over the phone at the request of a member of staff.
- Using the mobile phone outside college hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in college time.
- Using a mobile phone outside college hours in such a way that it undermines the Catholic ethos and values of our college.

Sanctions

Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the college's behaviour policy.

In addition:

- Students and their parents should be very clear that the college is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- If a phone is confiscated, college will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone 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. College will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated:

- It should be handed in by the member of staff to student reception at the earliest opportunity. Office staff will check the mobile phone log to determine if it is a first or a repeat offence.
- If it is a first offence the phone can be collected by the student at the end of the day.
- College will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored securely and in such a way that it is returned to the correct person.
- In the case of repeated misuse the phone will be confiscated for a period of up to three college days at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will decide who the phone will be returned to.
- In the case of serious misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the college to collect the phone. If there is suspected criminal activity a phone will be handed to the police or kept until the police agree it can be returned.

Where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to college. This may be for a fixed period or permanent ban. Parents will be consulted but the Headteacher's decision will be final.

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 if it is reasonably suspected that the data or file on the device in question raises a safeguarding concern, has been or could be used to cause harm, disrupt teaching or break the college rules. The member of staff may erase the files if they have good reason to do so. If necessary the college will seek the co-operation of parents 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.

Loss, theft or damage:

Students bringing phones to college must ensure that phones are stored securely when not in use.

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 data breaches.

The college accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on college premises or transport, during college visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from college.

Use of mobile phones by staff

Use of personal mobile phones is restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the college where students are not present (such as 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 college
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

Staff should use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct. This includes:

- Not using their phones to take photographs or recordings of students, or anything else which could identify a student
- Refraining from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact should be made via the college office
- Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential college information.
- 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.

The college however is aware that the safeguarding of students is paramount and that circumstances may arise where staff may need to use their personal device. Staff should use their professional judgement in these circumstances and inform the headteacher of their actions as soon as possible after the event.

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the college for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use college phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use the work phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the college site during the college day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at college.

Parents must use the college office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the college day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the college day.

This policy applies to mobile phones and any other electrical device brought into college.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's Behaviour for Learning Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Complaints Policy

Policy approved on