

## Mobile Device Policy



**Approved by:** Full Governing Body

**Date:** January 2024

**Last reviewed on:**  
October 2023

**Next review due by:**  
January 2025

For the purpose of this policy a mobile device is any portable device which is capable of photographing/recording/messaging/connecting to the internet/enabling communication. These devices include mobile phones, smart watches, headphones and tablets or any other device deemed to fit the definition.

Mobile devices and, in particular, the new generation of smart devices such as mobile phones and smart watches now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile 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 devices.

For many young people today the ownership of a mobile device is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the mobile device has great potential to support a student's learning experiences.

Parents and students should be clear that misuse of mobile devices 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 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 Whatsapp or YouTube.
- Bullying by text, image and email messaging.
- The use of a mobile device for 'sharing nudes' (the deliberate taking and sending or reposting 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 devices in lessons.
- students contacting 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 device 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 device, 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 device 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 device in college by students**

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

- A mobile phone must be kept in a student's bag during lessons. The device is not allowed to be in a pocket or on the student's person.
- A smart watch must not be used to communicate with others or to access the internet during the school day. A member of staff suspecting this is the case will be sufficient for the smart watch to be confiscated.
- 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 device can only be used once the student has left the college site.
- In an examination setting the device must be switched off and in the student's bag
- The security of a device will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons including PE lessons.
- If asked to do so, content on the device (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 device 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 device off or refusing to hand over the device at the request of a member of staff.
- Using the mobile device 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 device 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 device where the guidelines have been breached.
- If a device is confiscated, college will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return. The college is not liable if the device is lost following its confiscation but the college will take every step to ensure this does not happen.

- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile 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. College will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

### **Confiscation procedure**

If a mobile device 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 device log to determine if it is a first or a repeat offence.
- If it is a first offence the device 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 device will be confiscated for a period of up to three college days at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will decide who the device will be returned to.
- In the case of serious misuse the device will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the college to collect the device. If there is suspected criminal activity the device 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 device 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 device 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, has disrupted teaching or has broken 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 devices to college must ensure that devices are stored securely when not in use.

Students must secure their devices as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the device's functions. Staff must also secure their personal devices, as well as any work device provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

The college accepts no responsibility for mobile devices 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 devices by staff**

Use of personal mobile devices 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 device 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 devices in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct. This includes:

- Not using their devices to take photographs or recordings of students, or anything else which could identify a student.
- Refraining from using their devices to contact parents. If necessary, contact should be made via the college office.
- Staff must not use their personal mobile devices 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 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 device by the college for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use college devices, and access to the device must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

- Only use the work device 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 devices 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 devices in lessons, or when working with students

Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile device 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 device during the college day. If a parent contacts their child via the child's mobile device and the child accesses the message then the device will still be confiscated and the usual procedures followed.

This policy applies to mobile devices 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