



Saint Benedict
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mobile Phone Policy

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

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1. Aims and Rationale

Mobile phones and the new generation of smart phones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an 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 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 pupil's learning experiences.

In recent years we have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying.

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

Parents and pupils should be clear that misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated. The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. '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 Instagram or Tik Tok.
- 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)
- pupils 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 teachers or other pupils
- general disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons
- pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

2. Dealing with breaches

Misuse of the mobile phone 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.

Pupils 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 school. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the Police.

The correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated and is not returned to the pupil at the end of a lesson. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely.

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.

3. Rules for the Acceptable Use of a mobile phone in school by pupils

Whilst pupils may bring a mobile phone in to school, we do not recommend or encourage it. Should they choose to so, it is on the understanding that they agree with the following limitations on its use, namely:

- Mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day, including break and lunchtimes, and remain off whilst pupils are on the school premises. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent mode.
- The phone must always be kept inside the pupils' school bag, and not be on their person such as inside their blazer pockets.
- No pupil may take a mobile phone into a room or other area where examinations are being held.
- The security of phone will remain the pupil'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.

4. Unacceptable use

The school will 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 pupils without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or pupils 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 outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and pupils will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time
- Using a mobile phone outside 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'.

5. Sanctions

Pupils and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's behaviour policy. In addition:

- pupils and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.

Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and pupils 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 phone is confiscated, school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Pupils and parents/carers 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 pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil 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.

6. Confiscation procedure

If a mobile phone is confiscated, then:

- In the first instance the mobile phone will be handed into the pupil's relevant Year Office, held securely, and may be returned at the end of the day.
- If this is the second time the student has had an item confiscated, it will be kept for three school days and may be collected at the end of the third school day.
- If a student has an item confiscated for a third time, the item will be kept securely until a parent or carer can come to the Academy to collect it.
- each confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person
- where a pupil persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Head may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

7. Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

- The Head teacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and if necessary, seek the cooperation 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 and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen
- School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the safeguarding 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.