

Porthcawl Comprehensive School

Mobile Phone Policy



Approved by: Full Governing Body	Date: 19 th October 2023
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Introduction and Aims

Aims

At Porthcawl Comprehensive School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our children, parents/carers 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 children, staff, parents/carers and volunteers; and
- Support the school's other policies, Safeguarding, Code of Conduct and Anti Bullying.

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:

- Safeguarding;
- Data protection (GDPR) issues;
- Disruption to lessons and learning; and
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage

Roles and Responsibilities

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 children accountable for its implementation.

Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

Pupil 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. Porthcawl Comprehensive School supports this approach wholeheartedly.

To that end, the school has adopted the following mobile phone best use policy:



- Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times; and
- Pupils must not use a mobile device, smart watch or electronic device including headphones anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a teacher. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment pupils enter the school site and ends once pupils leave the school site.

Please note, there may be circumstances where identified pupils will be required to use their mobile phones for medical purposes (e.g. diabetes). The school fully supports this required medical use and when a learner requires this adjustment all information will be shared with staff across the school.

Pupils must adhere to the following:

- If a pupil brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it should be switched off or set on 'silent' and kept out of sight, for example in a bag.
- Any mobile phone brought onto school site should not be seen or heard (including vibrate) throughout the school day;
- The phone can be switched back on and/or returned to 'loud' upon leaving the school site. (Not before and not during any period of social time. E.g. break or lunch time);
- Any pupil found using or known to have used their phone during the school day will have their phone confiscated. Confiscated phones can be collected at the end of the day from the main school reception. Parents/Carers will be informed via the Head of Year, relevant teacher, or an identified member of support staff. Pupils will be asked to sign for their phone;
- If a pupil is a repeat offender, the school will request a parent/carer to come in and collect the phone from the school.
- Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a follow up sanction in line with the school's Code of Conduct. This would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff.
- Mobile phones will not be permitted to be used at any after school extra-curricular clubs, except under the specific direction of a teacher.

Designated areas:

The Headteacher reserves the right to allow phones in selected areas given individual circumstances. A teacher and/or member of staff has permission to allow a pupil to use their phone in an individual circumstance. An example might be to text a parent about sports kit or a fixture.



Contacting Children and Parents/Carers

In non-urgent situations, parents wishing to contact their child during the school day should ring the school. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to children and Ty Enfys / Student Support if it is needed. Children who need to contact parents/carers during the course of the school day should go to the school reception or speak to their Form Tutor / Head of Year, who will advise as to the most appropriate way forward.

Sanctions

If a phone is seen by a member of staff, it will be confiscated by them. Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from children under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

Once confiscated, the mobile phone will be placed in an envelope and taken to the main school reception where the pupil will be allowed to sign for and collect it at the end of the school day.

If a pupil has their mobile phone repeatedly confiscated (three or more occasions), we will request a parent or carer collects it from main reception after 3:15pm.

If we have reason to believe the mobile phone (or other/linked electronic device such as Smart Watch or iPad) contains inappropriate images/content, or if it is being / has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, staff (Duty Officer, Head of Year, member of the Senior Leadership Team) will impose an appropriate sanction in line with the school's Code of Conduct.

Irresponsible / inappropriate use of a mobile phone (or another similar linked device such as Smart Watch or iPad) can result in detention, inclusion or a fixed term exclusion from school.

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 / Police Liaison Officer, Neighbourhood Policing Team, or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Photographing / filming without consent (GDPR)
- Recording sound / recordings without consent (GDPR)
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.



Note: Recording staff or other pupils without permission is unacceptable and will result in a sanction. Covert recordings can lead to claims of breach of privacy and/or confidentiality.

Use of mobile phones by staff

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 pupils are present. However, this only applies to personal devices and does not apply to those staff using the school's internal phone/text/email system where a number of staff have a handheld mobile device.

The use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as department / faculty 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
- Medical reasons via a mobile device app (e.g. diabetes)

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

Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, 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/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment. Please note, before any publishing, all records of photographic consent must be checked.

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 EWC Code of Professional Conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil.

Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone type device by the school for work purposes. Each member of staff with such device has a personal (internal) number and are provided with the ability to text and email.

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.

Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. 'Managing Staff in Schools: Disciplinary Procedures'.

Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, 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 school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of pupils or staff, unless it is a public event, or of their own child;
- 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 pupils.

Parents/carers, 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 school.



Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for children using their phones, as set out above.

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

Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are stored securely and out of sight when not in use.

Pupils 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 pupil'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 in the school office in a secure location and must be signed out by the pupil or parent/carer upon return.

Lost phones should be returned to the school reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on children's education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account relevant advice from the Welsh Government, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Approved by the Governing Body on:



Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement for children

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons or activities, unless the teacher specifically allows you to.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent') and remain out of sight.
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating children or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
10. Do not record sound and/or videos as this is a breach of privacy or confidentiality.
11. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's Code of Conduct.
12. You 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 Code of Conduct and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you 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 your exam being declared invalid.



Appendix 2: Permission form allowing a pupil to bring their phone on a trip

PUPIL DETAILS	
Pupil Name:	
Year Group/Class:	
Parent/Carer Name:	
Trip:	

Porthcawl Comprehensive School has agreed to allow [pupil name] to bring [his/her] mobile phone on the above-named school trip, because [he/she] is attending a school trip or residential where use of mobile phones will be allowed.

Children who bring a mobile phone on the school trip must abide by the school's policy on the use of mobile phones, and its acceptable use agreement (which can be found in the Mobile Phone Policy).

The school reserves the right revoke permission if children do not abide by the policy.

Parent signature: _____

Child signature: _____



Appendix 3: Template 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 go to the staff room
- Do not take photos or recordings (both video and sound) 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 from the school office.





PERSEVERANCE CREATES SUCCESS

