

Mobile Phone Policy

SEPTEMBER 2020

THE BERWICK WAY

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Mobile Phone Policy

Approved by:	Headteacher	Date:	July 2020
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1. Introduction and aims

At Berwick Academy we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents 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 pupils, staff, parents and volunteers;
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour.

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

- Risks to child protection;
- Data protection issues;
- Potential for lesson disruption;
- Risk of theft, loss or damage;
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 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 Deputy Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Trustees

Trustees will monitor this policy via the link trustee for safeguarding.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive personal calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present.

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.

The Headteacher will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow for special arrangements. If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the main school telephone number as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data relating to the school or a pupil, or any other confidential school information.

Staff may, at their own discretion, use a personal mobile phone to access their work emails, as long as appropriate privacy settings are enabled.

3.3 Safeguarding

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Further details are found in the Social Media Policy.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phone 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.

3.4 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 aren't limited to:

- Emergency evacuations;
- Supervising off-site trips, although a school mobile should be used where available;
- Supervising residential visits, although a school mobile should be used where available.

In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct;
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil;

- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office or a school mobile.

3.5 Work phones

Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes.

Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.

Staff must:

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

3.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

We recognise that mobile phones play a role in the lives of pupils outside of school, and that many see these as an essential safety device for the journey to and from school. The school does not permit mobile phones to be switched on when the student is on school premises during the school day. This decision is due to a number of factors, including:

- **Safeguarding:** The Department for Education states that, “it is essential that students are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material”. The school uses filters to make sure that pupils cannot access harmful material on school computers, however, students using mobile phones may be exposed to potentially harmful material without the school being able to protect them or intervene.
- **Pupil wellbeing:** There is increasing evidence to suggest that social media can have an adverse impact on pupils’ wellbeing and mental health. In 2017, the Royal Society of Public Health found that social media inspired feelings of inadequacy and anxiety amongst 11-25 year olds.
- **Behaviour at school:** We want pupils to develop socially, as well as academically. By asking pupils to have their mobile phones turned off and in their bags, we will encourage them to talk to each other and to take advantage of the activities the school offers during social time.
- **Bullying:** Many pupils in schools across the country have reported feeling bullied by peers using mobile phones. Having phones switched off will help us to create a safe learning environment for all, and help to prevent opportunities for cyberbullying during the school day.
- **Good practice:** The rules around mobile devices and examinations are very strict, and the consequences of not following the rules are severe. Pupils in a high school setting spend much time preparing for, and sitting, formal examinations, including a range of activities within the classroom which also have to be undertaken under exam conditions. If a pupil is found in possession of a mobile telephone, whether on or off, they risk being disqualified from that examination and may not achieve a grade in that subject.

4.1 Definition

Technology advances rapidly and, for the purpose of this policy, all mobile communication devices are referred to as mobile phones. Therefore, any reference to “mobile phone” is interchangeable with devices including, but not limited to:

- Smartphones;
- Smart watches;
- Tablets;

- Video camera;
- Handheld gaming devices;
- Any other device that can connect to the internet and communicate with others.

4.2 Policy Statement – Pupil Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not to be seen or used from the time pupils arrive at school in the morning until the time they leave the school site at the end of the day. This includes break and lunchtime. If a pupil's mobile phone is used, seen or heard during these times they will be required to hand over their phone to a member of staff. Phones that have been handed-in will be stored in the admin office.

4.3 Sanctions

The first time in an academic year a pupil's phone is confiscated it can be collected from the office by the pupil after the bell sounds for the end of the school day. This will be recorded as a negative incident on the pupil's behaviour record.

If a pupil has a phone confiscated for a second time in one academic year, the phone will only be returned after 3.10pm to a parent or carer. Phones will not be returned to brothers, sisters or friends.

If a pupil is rude or disrespectful to a member of admin staff in an attempt to get their phone back, they will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

If a pupil refuses to hand in their phone to be confiscated, this will be treated as an act of defiance and the pupil will be sanctioned in line with school policies. This may involve a fixed term exclusion.

If a pupil has their mobile phone confiscated on more than two occasions in an academic year, the school will impose a more serious sanction, which will be determined by a member of the SLT.

4.4 Contact between home and school

Mobile phones must not be used to contact parents/carers from the time pupils arrive at school in the morning until they leave the school site at the end of the day. In an emergency, the school will allow pupils to use the school reception phone to contact parents/carers.

Parents/carers should not contact pupils on their mobile phones during school hours. Urgent messages can be related to pupils via the school office.

4.5 Students in Years 12 and 13

Students at Berwick Academy Sixth Form should have their mobile phones turned off and out of sight when on the school site. Phones may be used in the Sixth Form common room during break and lunch times, however, sixth form students must abide by the expectations in section 5 of this policy.

Sixth Form students who use their phone elsewhere in the school will have it confiscated in line with all students on site. Repeated non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Sixth Form students are able to bring in other devices, such as laptops, which comply with the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) protocols for safe log in and completing work in school.

5. Inappropriate use of mobile devices

5.1 Photographs, video or other recordings

Pupils must not use their mobile phones in school. If a pupil uses any device to take photographs, video or audio recordings without the permission of the subject, the pupil will be excluded from the school for a fixed period of five days. On the pupil's return, they, and their parent/carers, will be expected to sign a behaviour agreement which will ensure that the pupil hands in their mobile phone to reception on arrival each morning and collects at the end of school each afternoon for a set period of time.

Should a pupil repeat this misconduct, they risk permanent exclusion from the school.

5.2 Photographs or video involving school uniform

Whilst pupils are in school uniform, for example on the way to and from school, mobile phones must not be used for taking photographs or video without the permission of the subject. The school considers pupils to be in school uniform even if ties / blazers are removed, or if the uniform is covered with a coat, jumper or other clothing. The school reserves the right to take action against pupils involved in any instances where such photographs/videos are used for cyberbullying or other bullying purposes, or if this causes disruption to the running of the school, or distress to individual pupils.

5.3 Bullying, harassment and abuse

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 or other agencies as appropriate.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation;
- Bullying or cyberbullying;
- Upskirting.

The school reserves the right to take appropriate internal action against pupils involved in this serious misconduct in addition to the actions of agencies such as the police. These sanctions may include a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

5.4 Sharing images, video or audio recordings

Where a pupil shares images, video or audio recording of another pupil, member of staff or visitor to the school without their consent, through whatever medium, including, but not limited to, social media, text, email; the school will take this seriously as a safeguarding incident. The pupil will receive sanctions appropriate to their actions and may be referred to the police or other agencies as appropriate. The sanctions applied will include the full range of sanctions available to the school, including a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

5.5 Headphones

Headphones are subject to the same rules as mobile phones unless a member of staff allows their use in lessons, for educational purposes, whilst plugged into a PC, laptop or other learning equipment. Headphones should not be worn in school from arrival in the morning to departure from the site.

6. School trips

A trip leader may authorise the use of mobile phones and headphones on long coach journeys. However, they should only be used to listen to music, they may not be used for communication purposes or to photograph, video or audio record other pupils or staff.

Staff may authorise the use of mobile phones to take photos of points of interest whilst on a trip. Staff may ask pupils to contact one another to relay important information in an emergency. Staff may allow pupils to use their phone to keep in touch with a parent/carer during a trip. However, the trip leader will make it clear to pupils about what is acceptable use of the mobile device on that trip and this will be agreed and communicated before the trip takes place.

7. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers 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, unless it is a public event (such as a school fair) and only of their own child;
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without the express consent of the school;
- 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 must use the school office 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 as the child is expected to have their phone switched off and out of sight during the school day.

8. Loss, theft or damage

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled and are stored securely 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 data breaches.

Berwick Academy accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

We will ensure that pupils and parents/carers are aware of the above disclaimer statement by:

- Putting a sign in the school reception area.
- Providing a copy of this policy to new pupils and parents/carers.

Confiscated phones will be stored in the Admin Office in a secure cabinet. These will be returned to either the pupil or parent/carer, as outlined in this policy, at the time stated.

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



Berwick Academy accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or other devices that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to or from school.

Pupils:

Mobile phones are not to be seen or used from the time pupils arrive at school in the morning until the time they leave the school site at the end of the day. This includes break and lunchtime. If a pupil's mobile phone is used, seen or heard during these times they will be required to hand it in to a member of staff. Handed-in phones will be stored in the admin office.

Staff:

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive personal calls, or send texts, while children are present. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present.

Visitors:

Visitors, including parents/carers and contractors, must not use mobile phones when children are present. Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child) or staff.