



Believing Rewarding Achieving

MOBILE TELEPHONE AND
ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2023

Title	Mobile Telephone and Electronic Devices Policy
Summary	Guidance for all stakeholders regarding: The use of mobile telephones and other electronic devices during the School day.
Purpose	To ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of the regulations for the use of mobile telephones and electronic devices.
Operational Date	September 2023
Next Review Date	August 2024
Author	Vice Principal (Pastoral)

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Introduction

Our children are growing up in the digital world and we hope to educate and inspire them to become great and responsible digital citizens. With your help, we hope to instil an appreciation of digital technology, develop pupils' digital skills and to help them to establish a strong set of digital values.



Managing digital devices is tough – for everyone

Digital parenting is 'one of the most challenging aspects of being a parent today' (Professor Sonia Livingstone, LSE). At home, we all enjoy the opportunities and benefits of digital technology for research, entertainment, work and education, but we can also appreciate the challenges that arise through digital usage. As adults, it is easy to understand how hard it can be to balance on and offline activities, or to avoid having our attention consumed by social media content! Even for some adults, it can be hard to resist watching a film, rather than read a good book; digital content is a consistent distraction and it requires a level of maturity to navigate responsibly and sensibly.

When it comes to our children's use of digital devices, the struggle is real. Parents often worry about young people's digital diets, which might include gaming, social media and access to inappropriate or extreme content. Parents are right to worry, but the good news is that research evidence suggests that a warm and transparent relationship between teens and parents can reduce the risk of digital harm and develop the kind of critical thinking skills and literacy required to overcome any online challenge or difficulty.



Good News for Parents and Carers



We are a **'Tooled Up Education school'** and, whilst your child is a current pupil, you can enjoy free access to a digital platform packed full of evidence-based resources, webinars, podcasts and articles designed to educate and support you on your parenting journey. As a registered Tooled Up parent, you are entitled to request resources, expert talks or Q&As, submit questions and receive full evidence-based responses from subject experts.



Managing Digital Distractions in School

Parents, you may have read recent articles in the press and online expressing concern around young people's use of smartphones in schools. Organisations like UNESCO have highlighted inappropriate use of technology by students in the classroom and at home and flagged the need for a change in policy. A recent analysis by UNESCO of 200 education systems around the world showed that one in four countries have actually taken steps to ban smartphones in school (Guardian: Put Learners First: Unesco calls for global ban on smartphones in schools).

We passionately believe in parent partnership and in developing a strong sense of 'united front' as parents and staff, in order to support pupils in our care. A strong sense of alignment should enable our pupils to thrive optimally. All of us want our children/pupils to enjoy their school years, thrive academically, socially and feel safe every day.



Our Parent Promise

We promise:

- ✓ To do everything in our power to ensure your child is able to thrive in our school setting. This involves ensuring they are not easily distracted during the school day with unnecessary digital devices and can focus on their friendships, social skills, sport, creative activities and academic learning.
- ✓ Our classrooms, our corridors and exam halls will be phone-free.
- ✓ Our no phones policy will reduce and hopefully eliminate opportunities for school-based inappropriate usage to flourish. Damaging experiences like cyberbullying, sexting and/or watching inappropriate content can harm young people's wellbeing, mental health and life opportunities, so we promise to do everything we can to protect them from making poor digital decisions during such a developmentally sensitive age and stage.
- ✓ That by not allowing blanket use of mobile phones across our school community, you won't have to worry about them being damaged, lost or stolen!
- ✓ That some children need a phone to travel between home and school safely. If your child requires a phone for this purpose, gently remind them not to look at their phone when crossing the road (major safety risk!) and to only access the phone on departure of the school site.

We do truly appreciate your support.

School Policy for pupils

The policy applies to **registered** pupils of the School and pupils involved in **Shared Education**.

These pupils are kindly asked to:

- Refrain from bringing mobiles, electronic devices or smart watches to school.
- Ask at the school office if they need to contact a parent or carer urgently during school hours.
- Remember that when after-school activities get cancelled, this will be communicated automatically to parents via our communication system.

Should parents choose to permit their child to bring a mobile phone or electronic device into our school, please note the following rules will apply:

- We cannot accept any responsibility for mobile phones and electronic devices, and undertake no responsibility to investigate misplacement, loss or theft.
- Mobile phones should be **“switched off and out of sight”** at all times. Any phone seen or heard will be retained; this includes phones on display in blazer or shirt pockets.
- Mobile phones **may not be used at any time on school premises**, no matter what time a pupil arrives into school.
- Pupils may not use their mobile phones to listen to music at any time across the school sites, including Roughfort and the Castle Grounds.
- Pupils may not use their mobile phones on the school buses to and from sports venues or on school trips that occur during the school day.
- Parents needing to contact pupils can do so, either by calling the General Office with **URGENT** messages or by sending a text message to their child which can be checked after they have left the school site.
- Mobile phones and accessories (including wearables such as smart watches, Fitbits and other monitoring equipment) must be switched off and out of sight at all times. **If a phone rings, or is seen by a member of staff, or if use is made of the phone, it will be retained. Any member of staff can confiscate a phone.** This includes all support staff and temporary teaching staff.

- **If a phone is retained, it will be left with the Principal.** Parents will be contacted by the Principal’s secretary to inform them of the confiscation and arrangements will be made for either a parent or other responsible adult to collect the item the next working day. Under no circumstances will a phone be returned directly to the pupil.
- If a phone is retained for a second time within the school year, it will only be returned to the parent after one week has elapsed.
- If a phone is retained for a third time within the school year, it will only be returned to the parent after four weeks has elapsed.
- If a phone is retained for more than three times within a school year, it will be dealt with in accordance with the Action Plan for Positive Behaviour, as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- ***The only exemption to this is when the pupil has been given special permission to keep their phone with them for specific health-related reasons as detailed in their PLP.***
- Phones may not be used in class for any reason including listening to music when completing work, taking photographs of work on the board, accessing Google Classroom or to use the calculator function.

Special Permission for Forms L6 and M6

It is recognised that Sixth Form pupils should have some privileges regarding the use of phones in school, so it is essential that they **model** the responsible use of such devices to their younger peers. The following represents the behaviours expected of Sixth Form pupils.

- Lower Sixth pupils are only permitted to use their mobile phones in the Lower Sixth common room.
- Middle Sixth pupils are only permitted to use their mobile phones in the Middle Sixth common room.
- Sixth Form pupils should not walk around the school site using phones between lessons and at break and lunch in view of the younger pupils.
- Outside of the respective common rooms, phones should be switched off and out of sight. This includes phones on display in blazer or shirt pockets.

School Policy for pupils

School Examinations

- The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) requires all examination centres to reinforce the rules and regulations about unauthorised items during external examinations. Potential technological / web-enabled sources of information such as mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 players, fitness trackers or watches are not permitted in the examination room. If a pupil is found to be in possession of any unauthorised item after the start of the examination, the device will be retained and a full report will be submitted to the examination board, who will take the necessary action in accordance with the JCQ Rules and Regulations on Malpractice. This may result in a disqualification.
- As a result of the JCQ Guidance, pupils who are sitting any school examinations are not permitted to be in possession of a watch or any other potential technological / web-enabled sources of information such as mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 players, fitness trackers or similar devices. If such a device sounds during an internal examination, even if no obvious advantage is gained, the pupil will lose their marks for the paper.

Electronic Devices

- Pupils should not bring any mobile electronic devices into school, such as handheld games consoles or tablet devices such as an iPad unless this has been specified in a pupil's Personal Learning Plan (PLP).

Emergencies

- If a pupil needs to contact his/her parents/guardians he/she will be allowed to use a school telephone which is available at the General Office. If parents need to contact children urgently they should phone the General Office and a message will be relayed promptly.

Responsibility for mobile phones and electronic devices

- The School accepts no responsibility for theft, loss, damage or health effects relating to mobile telephones or other electronic devices. It is the responsibility of parents and pupils to ensure mobile telephones are properly insured.