



Mobile Phones

Policy

At

Bedstone College

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Staff	All
Gov	JPSF (Chair)

Purpose

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

Bedstone College has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones that provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy as a condition upon which permission is given to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school trips and extra-curricular activities both on the school premises and off-site.

Rationale

The staff and Governors of Bedstone College recognise that many students and their families own a mobile phone. We also recognise that some parents/guardians request that their child brings a mobile phone to school for safety and security reasons on the way to and from school.

The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used well.

Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions. Therefore the school discourages the bringing of mobile phones to school by students. The school is prepared to allow mobile phones on the premises but only within the parameters of the policy as stated below.

Aims

To inform all members of our school community about the appropriate use of mobile phones at our school and to outline the procedures and processes of this policy.

Personal safety and security

Our school accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety.

It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers. It is incumbent upon parents to understand the capabilities of the phone and the potential use/misuse of those capabilities.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school it is assumed household insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage while on the school site, or during a school trip or activity.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office/reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way.

Guidelines

Staff

There is a separate 'Acceptable Use of Cameras and Mobile Phones in the Junior School' policy for staff. All staff also receive guidance on 'safe use of technology' and relevant documentation is given to all staff as part of their safeguarding induction when they join Bedstone College.

Except in urgent or exceptional situations, mobile phone use is not permitted during teaching time, while on duty or when in the presence of students.

In accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy staff should not use personal devices for photography in school. Only School cameras or devices are to be used.

Students

In general, students should not bring valuable items to school, as they can be easily lost or stolen.

Students remain responsible for all of their personal effects whilst at school. When students enter the school grounds the school takes no responsibility for mobile phones. Mobile phones are brought to school entirely at the owner's risk. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

It is the view of Bedstone College that there are no reasons why a student needs to have in their possession or use a mobile phone during the school day. However, we accept that students and families may hold a different view.

If students do bring their mobile phone to school it should be clearly marked with their name.

Parents

For safeguarding reasons parents are advised not to use camera phones to take images on the school grounds.

Parents should not place images of other children taken at school on social media sites without permission from the parents involved.

Although we instruct all students to disable 3G/4G while at school and access the internet only through our secure Wi-Fi network, we cannot guarantee that this will be done everyday, throughout the day. If you know that your child takes their mobile phone to/from school, then you should consider placing parental controls on their access of the internet while they are not at home. This can be done through your network provider.

Acceptable Uses

Parents/carers are requested that in cases of emergency they contact the school reception so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

Mobile phones cannot be used at any time during the college day.

If a mobile phone is brought to school it must be set to 'silent', or turned off during the college day.

Mobile phones may be used when given permission by a member of the teaching staff.

Mobile phones may be used after 'pm' registration on Wednesday and Saturday.

Mobile phones may be used when on college transport.

Unacceptable Uses

Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, take photos or used for voice recordings during the school day. Calls may be made to parents/guardians while on college transport.

The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

Access to the internet while at school must be through the college Wi-Fi network and not through 3G/4G network providers. You should disable 3G/4G data while on the college site. This applies to all students, whether they are boarders or day students.

Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable. Cyber bullying will not be tolerated. In some cases it can constitute criminal behaviour. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given.

It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos/voice recordings and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload them to a website or other social media platform for public viewing.

This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film/record any student or member of staff without their consent. It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced.

Using mobile devices to send or store inappropriate images of children is unacceptable and may result in the incident being referred to the Police or other outside agency for further action.

Mobile phones are not to be used in changing rooms or toilets or in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

It is unacceptable to take a picture of or to record (video or audio) a member of staff without their permission. In the event that this happens the student will be asked and expected to delete those images, the phone will be confiscated and their parents will be contacted.

Theft or Damage

Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen or damaged while travelling to and from school, during the school day or while on a school trip or activity.

It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (e.g. by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

Sanctions

On the first infringement of this policy the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place within the school. The student will have their phone returned at the end of the school day and a verbal warning will be issued.

On the second, or subsequent, infringements, the school will take further action which is appropriate, proportionate and in line with the behaviour policy.

The school has the right to take further disciplinary action if a student is involved in incidents of inappropriate behaviour, that are covered in this agreement, when a student is out of school and where they involve membership of the school community (examples would be cyber-bullying, use of images or personal information). This might include referral to the police or other outside agency.

Inappropriate Use

Generally, a mobile phone will be used inappropriately if it:

disrupts or is likely to disrupt the learning environment or interfere with the operation of the school; or

threatens or is likely to threaten the safety or well-being of any person; or is in breach of any law.

Inappropriate use of mobile phones will include students using them to bully, intimidate or otherwise harass other people through any SMS or text message, photographic, video or other data transfer system available on the phone. This type of misuse will be dealt with under the Behaviour, Anti-Bullying and/or safeguarding policies.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. This includes sending messages using offensive language. The school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.

Inappropriate conduct

Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students MUST hand phones to invigilators on entering the exam hall. The examination boards have a zero tolerance policy if students are found in possession of mobile phones in the examination hall. The school will notify the examination board if any student is found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination.

Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone or whose text messages contain such language will face disciplinary action.

Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action.

Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading, Racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence.

Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery - is also a criminal offence. There is a separate policy on 'sexting' that is available to all staff, students and parents on the college website, together with a local authority training video that staff, students and parents might find useful.

Personal mobile phones brought in by students cannot be charged during the normal college day in lessons.

Related Technology

The procedures applying to the inappropriate use and security of mobile phones, apply equally to the inappropriate use of portable computer games, iPod, iPad and similar devices.

Exemptions

Exemptions of this policy can only be approved by the Head Teacher, or in their absence the Deputy Head (Pastoral), and then only in exceptional circumstances.

Disclaimer

Students are not required to have a mobile phone in school and we support parents who make the decision that this is not necessary by ensuring that students are able to use the school landlines to contact parents in an emergency. Parents can, of course, contact school via the landline. This policy does, however, recognise that the majority of our students own a mobile phone and many would like to bring them to school.

The school reserves the right to confiscate mobile phones, (or other such devices) if a student does not follow this policy and the time frame for the return of the item will be at the discretion of the Deputy Headmaster (Pastoral). It might be in some cases, that a student is permanently prohibited from bringing a mobile phone, or other such device, to school for a fixed term or permanently.