

MOBILE PHONE/DEVICES ACCEPTABLE USE FOR STUDENTS POLICY

1. Introduction

Mobile phones are now a feature of modern society and most of our pupils own one. Increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology presents a number of issues for schools:

- The high value of many phones
- The integration of cameras and internet browsing into phones, leading to potential child protection and data protection issues
- The potential to use the phone, e.g. for texting, whilst on silent mode

It is not realistic to prohibit phones being brought to school, nor is it logistically possible for schools to collect phones in each morning and return them in the afternoon. It is our policy to allow pupils to have a mobile phone with them in school under the conditions outlined in the policy below. Whilst the main focus of this document is mobile phones, this policy also applies to other mobile devices such as: i watches, tablets and laptops.

It is important that all students have read, understood and signed the Student Acceptable Use Policy. In addition, we strongly advise that students have read and understood the school policies on Anti Bullying, Cyber Bullying and the Photography Policy, all of which are available on the website (www.lvs.ascot.sch.uk/Policies).

1.1. 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 at school. 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.

1.2. LVS Ascot 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.

1.3. Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Mobile Phone Acceptable Use for Students Policy as a condition upon which an agreement is given to bring mobile phones to school.

1.4. The Mobile Phone Acceptable Use for Students Policy also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities both on the school campus and off-site.

2. Rationale

2.1. The large catchment and wide travel to work area for working parents presents challenges when it comes to communications. The school recognises that personal communication through mobile technologies is an accepted part of everyday life but that such technologies need to be used appropriately, safely and legally.

2.2. The School accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. 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.

3. Responsibility

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

3.2. 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.

3.3. Parents/carers should be aware if their child brings a mobile phone to school. It is assumed household or private insurance will provide the required cover in the event of loss or damage. The school cannot accept responsibility for any loss, damage or costs incurred due to its use.

3.4. Pupils are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current mobile phone to aid return if lost on the school site.

3.5. Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school office remains a vital and should be the first point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any relevant way. Passing on messages through school reception also reduces the likelihood of disrupting lessons inadvertently.

4. Acceptable Uses

4.1. Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight during classroom lessons, while moving between lessons and break times/lunchtimes. Parents/carers are requested that, in cases of emergency, they contact the school first so we are aware of any potential issue and may make the necessary arrangements.

4.2. The school recognises the importance of emerging technologies present in modern mobile phones e.g. camera and video recording, internet access, MP3 and MP4 playback, blogging etc. On some occasions teachers may wish to utilise these functions to aid teaching and learning and pupils may have the opportunity to use their mobile phones in the classroom. On these instances pupils may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher. The use of personal mobile phones in one lesson for a specific purpose does not mean blanket usage is then acceptable.

4.3. As highlighted in 4.2, pupils may use their mobile phones in the classroom when express permission has been given by the teacher, in particular when entering/receiving school relevant information on Microsoft Outlook and checking date/time. Pupils will also be able to check such applications and other times set out within the policy.

4.4. Sixth Form students during study periods and break times are only permitted to use their phones when required on the patio area outside (Car Park Side) the Sixth Form Centre.

4.5. The use of camera and video applications during school and without any authorisation from staff is prohibited.

4.6. Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to close friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

4.7. The internet can only be used through the schools Wi-Fi under the Bring Your Device Policy (BYOD).

5. Unacceptable Uses

5.1. Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, surf the internet, take photos or use any other application during school hours.

5.2. Mobile phones should be concealed and not be displayed in the school buildings at any time, unless consent to do so is given.

5.3. 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.

5.4. Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons or interfere with the flow in school buildings during break times, with ring tones, music or beeping. They should be turned off during lesson times.

5.5. 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.

5.6. It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film 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.

5.7. Mobile phones under any circumstances are not to be used or taken (where at all possible) into changing rooms, swimming pool or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

5.8. Should there be more than one disruption to lessons caused by a mobile phone, the responsible student may face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Deputy Head Pastoral and/or the Principal.

5.9. It is unacceptable to take any pictures or videos of staff or students unless this has been expressly authorised by a member of staff and is both relevant and appropriate. In the event of an unauthorised pictures or videos the student will be asked and expected to delete those images and will face disciplinary action.

5.10. Whilst using school transport either to or from school, fixtures or trips, students are expected to display high standards of positive behaviour. Students are permitted to use their phone as an MP3 player unless otherwise told by the member of staff in charge.

5.11. Pornographic or obscene images are forbidden.

5.12. Sexting – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery is forbidden (While sexting can include images they are not the only type of sexting). Text/Messages of a sexual nature can also constitute sexting.

5.13. Mobile phones are banned from all examinations. Students are expected to hand phones to invigilators before entering the exam hall. Any student found in possession of a mobile phone during an examination will have that paper disqualified. Such an incident may result in all other exam papers being disqualified.

6. Theft or damage

6.1. Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

6.2. Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' they have them.

6.3. Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed to front office reception.

6.4. The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

6.5. The school accepts no responsibility for students who lose or have their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

6.6. 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.

6.7. Lost and stolen mobile phones in the U.K. can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Sanctions

7.1. Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phones confiscated by teachers. If the phone is being used inappropriately the student must give it to a teacher if requested; they may collect it at the end of the school day.

7.2. Any confiscated phone will result in House Points being deducted from the House Cup totals.

7.3. Pupils should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse 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 and parents will be involved.

7.4. SMT will have the right to view files stored in confiscated equipment and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these Guidelines unless these are being preserved as evidence.

7.5. If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen. SMT will consider whether an incident should be reported to the Child Protection Team.

8. Protocol for Boarders

8.1. Pupils in Year 9 and below hand in their mobiles at night while older pupils are allowed to keep theirs.

8.2. However, if they abuse this privilege it will be withdrawn. Any pupil who abuses the use of mobiles/IT equipment after lights out may have the item confiscated for 24 hours in the first instance. Repeated offences will lead to further sanctions.

8.3. Parents must ensure that any devices which allow access to the internet have filters to prevent viewing inappropriate material. This is to protect the owner of the phone and other pupils.

8.4. Mobile phones/IT equipment are the responsibility of pupils and unless they are handed in to House staff, the school cannot be held responsible for their loss or theft.

8.5. Mobile phones under any circumstances are not to be used or taken (where at all possible) into wash rooms or toilets or used in any situation in the boarding house and dorms that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to their fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

8.6. Pupils should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse 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 and parents will be involved.

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Last reviewed: 21.11.2017
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