

St Katherine's School



Mobile Devices Policy

This policy applies to mobile phones and other portable electronic devices.

Policy Number SKP C018

Next Review: November 2025

Signed : Justin Humphreys
Headteacher

Dated : 30.11.23

Signed: William Harding

Dated : 30.11.23

Chair of Governors

1. Introduction and overview

- 1.1 For the purposes of this policy, a 'mobile device' is any electronic device small enough to be carried around. The term generally implies wireless communications and a capacity for general computing. Many devices offer a wide range of photographic and messaging applications.

This definition includes (but not be limited to) smart phones, tablets, e-readers, smart watches, 'iPods' and other mp3 players. They require similar oversight and security to other larger 'fixed' ICT devices.

- 1.2 Many of our students now use/own mobile devices which are an important and useful part of our social life, enabling easy and effective communication and access to information. In a school with a wide catchment many families rely on mobile telephones to ensure their child's safety and welfare in unforeseen circumstances.
- 1.3 As a school, we embrace the use of innovative technologies and acknowledge the school's key role in promoting their effective use through education and support in improving their learning.. We believe that we share a responsibility in helping young people to use such technology in a responsible, safe and considerate manner. The school endeavours to protect students from any dangers such technology might pose, for example in using the South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) for learning filters on internet access.
- 1.4 While access to mobile technologies can open up access to learning for students, there are also potential risks involved in their use and the changing nature of the technology presents potential safeguarding risks for the school. This policy is intended to promote acceptable use across our school community.
- 1.5 In the application of this policy the school will take account of its responsibilities to make Reasonable Adjustments in accordance in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act (2010) and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 - 25 years (2015). Any agreement to make variations to the 'Permitted Use' will be made in consultation with the school's Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCO).

2. Rules for the Acceptable Use of mobile devices in school by students

- 2.1 Students are permitted to bring mobile devices into school. The School, however, will not accept any responsibility for loss, theft, damage or consequent investigations involving a student's mobile device. **It is strongly recommended that parents ensure there is sufficient insurance in place for loss, theft or damage away from home.**

2.2 Students bring mobile devices to school on the understanding that they agree with the following:

- Mobile devices must be **switched off** from the time students arrive on site until the end of the school day or when they leave the school site, if earlier. It is not acceptable for devices merely to be put on vibrate or silent mode.
- If a smart watch is worn, **the phone function must be switched off**. If a student is seen receiving notifications on their smart watch, their watch will be confiscated.
- Mobile phones must be switched off in all rooms where examinations are being held.
- If, in the course of any investigation, a member of staff has good reason to check or delete content on a mobile phone or other device, students are expected to comply with this request.
- Failure to comply with these rules will lead to the mobile device being confiscated.

3. Unacceptable use

The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile device and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in a consequence. Parents/Carers and students should be clear that unacceptable use of mobile devices will not be tolerated.

3.1 The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. 'Misuse' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- Photographing or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission.
- Photographing or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- Taking inappropriate photographs, e.g. upskirting.
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or students by the use of text, email or multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites.
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube.
- Bullying by text, image or email messaging.
- The use of a mobile device for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages).
- Students posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation or others and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others.
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students.
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing devices in lessons.
- Students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised.
- Refusing to switch a device off or hand over a device at the request of a member of staff.

- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students where this may put them at additional risk whether done in school time or outside school hours.
- Using a mobile device outside of school hours in such a way that it undermines the reputation and stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfill its stated aims.
- Using the mobile device outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff or students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

4. Dealing with unacceptable use

- 4.1 Misuse of the mobile device will be dealt with using the same principles set out in the Pupil Behaviour policy, with the response being proportionate to the level of misuse.
- 4.2 Students are aware that misuse will lead to the confiscation of their mobile device, communication with parents and the imposition of other consequences up to and including exclusion from school. Depending upon the nature of the incident, the Police and/or Social Services may be informed.
- 4.3 On the authority of the Headteacher, school staff may search any mobile device in the presence of the student, when they have good reason to do so. They can decide whether to delete any file or data from the device.
- 4.4 The action will be properly recorded in case it later becomes evidence of criminal activity. The record will include the time, who was present and what is found.
- 4.5 The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored on confiscated equipment and if necessary seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in clear breach of these guidelines unless they are being preserved as evidence.
- 4.6 If required, evidence of the offence or suspected offence will be preserved, preferably by confiscation of the device and keeping it secure or by taking photographs of the screen.
- 4.7 The designated staff member will monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

5. Confiscation Procedure

If a mobile device is confiscated, school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.

- 5.1 Where misuse is deemed to have taken place, the device will be confiscated. The device will be taken to the Student Support Office as soon as is reasonably possible.
- 5.2 The confiscation will be recorded in the school behaviour log for monitoring purposes
- 5.4 The device will stay in school until the end of the following school day unless it is collected by a parent/carer in agreement with the school. The school is unlikely to agree to collection on anything other than a first offence.
- 5.5 Where a student persistently breaches the expectations and following a clear warning, the Headteacher may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile device to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban depending upon the circumstances.

6. Consequences

Students and parents/carers should be aware that:

- they will be notified that appropriate action, in line with the school's behaviour policy, will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines;
- the school is within its rights to confiscate the mobile device where the guidelines have been breached;
- the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile device where criminal activity is suspected;
- in the case of an incident which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff, the ultimate consequence may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction.

7. School Site

- 7.1 Devices and headphones must be switched off and in bags at all times and are not to be visible during the school day.
- 7.2 Students are not to use mobile devices/earphones to listen to music or use as calculators during the school day.
- 7.3 With the teacher's permission, Post-16 students may use a mobile device's camera to photograph work or the whiteboard but may not photograph or film another individual or their work without that individual's permission.

8. Permitted Use of Mobile Devices

- 8.1 The school has a separate Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy which allows students to apply to ICT Support to use a mobile device on the wireless network to access the filtered internet connection. Students must use their devices in accordance with the rules set out in this policy and the BYOD policy.

- 8.2 Where use of a personal mobile device is being proposed as a 'Reasonable Adjustment' to facilitate a student's learning in accordance with the Equality Act (2010) and Code of Practice (2015), the school's SENDCO must be involved in any agreed arrangements.
- 8.3 KS3 and KS4 students can apply through the SENDCO and the Bring Your Own Device Policy to use their personal devices on the wireless network to access the internet.
- 8.4 Sixth Form students can apply through the Bring Your Own Device Policy to use their personal devices on the wireless network to access the internet.
- 8.5 All chargers must be PAT tested before being used in school as per section 2.9 in the Bring Your Own Device Policy. PAT testing days will be arranged at specific times during the academic year. If you are using a charger with a mobile device care must be taken to not create a trip hazard with trailing wires.

9. Social Time (break and lunchtime)

- 9.1 Students may not use mobile devices in social time
- 9.2 Devices and headphones must be switched off and in bags at all times and are not to be visible.
- 9.3 Students with Chromebooks must use these in designated areas at unstructured times and not in the dining hall.
- 9.4 Post 16 students may use mobile devices out of lessons in the Sixth Form Common Room and in private study areas, but not in the dining hall or on the field.

10. Home-Student communication

- 10.1 Parents/carers should contact the school, via telephone, if they need to deliver an important message.
- 10.2 Students who need to contact home should do so by reporting to the Student Support Office at break time and lunchtime and ask to use a school telephone.
- 10.3 Information about sporting activities will be shared with parents/carers via social media. If a student wishes to confirm any sporting arrangements they should report to the PE office at break time or lunchtime.
- 10.4 Students should not contact their parents directly by using a mobile device if they feel unwell. They should report to the Student Support Office using our green lanyard system. Our trained first aider will then decide if the child is too ill to remain in school.
- 10.5 If a student is ill and needs to contact home, they should approach their class teacher in the normal way. The teacher will, if necessary, send them to the Student Support Office to make the decision about contact with parents. Students should not use a mobile device to make initial contact with a parent/carer.
- 10.6 Students may use their mobile devices at the end of the school day or on leaving the school site, if earlier, to check any messages or contact home.

11. Staff

- 11.1 Staff should only use their mobile device in offices or the Staff Room.
- 11.2 Staff are permitted to use school devices e.g. iPads throughout the school day.

12. Links with other policies

12.1 This policy is linked to our:

- Pupil Behaviour policy
- ICT acceptable use policy
- Bring Your Own Device policy
- Data protection and privacy notices
- Child Protection & Safeguarding policy

13. Monitoring and review

13.1 The implementation of this policy will be monitored by governors and reviewed at least every two years.