

Mark Rutherford School



Mobile Phone Policy

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Governor's Committee:	Curriculum and Standards
Adopted by the Governing Body on:	
Signed (Chair of Committee):	
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CONTENTS

1. Introduction and aims	3
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. Use of mobile phones by staff	3
4. Use of mobile phones by pupils	4
5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors	5
6. Loss, theft or damage	6
7. Monitoring and review	6
8. Appendix 1: Acceptable use agreement: Pupils	7
7. Appendix 4: Template mobile phone (information slip for visitors)	8

1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

At Mark Rutherford School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers 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/carers 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 Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour, Safeguarding and Student Welfare) are responsible for monitoring the policy annually, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Governors

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Curriculum and Standards governing body sub-committee. The chair of this committee will sign this policy to state that this has been ratified.

3. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STAFF

As per the expectations in our Staff Code of Conduct, mobile phones must be switched off or silent at all times. Staff should only use their mobile phones for personal calls during personal time in private and away from the eyes of the students. Staff must never store parents/carers or students telephone numbers on their mobile phone. Staff will be issued with a school mobile phone for use in case of emergency on school trips or offsite activities. Staff must not use their mobile phone or other mobile device as a camera or audio-visual recorder to record sound or images of students. School devices will be provided for these tasks.

Personal mobile telephones and hand-held devices should not normally be used:

- In lessons when teaching is taking place.
- When directly supervising students inside or outside of the school whilst also being responsible for their health and safety.
- In front of students for personal use.

The points made on the previous page aim to not only protect pupils but also to protect employees from allegations of misconduct or inappropriate behaviour.

Employees bringing a personal mobile phone or hand-held device into school do so at their own risk. The school will not be held responsible or accept any liability for personal equipment that is lost or is stolen.

3.1 Photography and Videos

Staff must be clear about the purpose of recording images and about what will happen to them once this activity is concluded. Informed written consent from parents/carers is sought and those students whose images cannot be used are recorded and circulated to staff by the Office Manager.

Staff must only take photographs/videos of students and/or their colleagues for school purposes.

Photographs taken for official school use may be covered by the Data Protection Act 2018 and/or the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document, and students/employees should be advised of the reasons why any photographs or videos are being taken.

Where images of students/staff are used for publicity purposes, appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their parents/carer must be obtained. Images must not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without explicit consent.

Staff taking photos for school purposes must only do so using school equipment, but where that is not available then personal devices may be used if approved by the Headteacher or Data Protection Officer (Mrs Simmonds – Business Manager).

In using a personal device, staff must ensure that:

- photos are not uploaded to personal cloud-based storage;
- photos are, at the earliest opportunity, uploaded to the school's shared drive and then deleted from personal devices, and/or;
- are not to be forwarded to unsecure email addresses.

Staff who are not clear on the use, collection or handling of data, should liaise with the school's Data Protection Officer. Ignorance regarding Data Protection regulations cannot be used as an excuse for failing to comply with the requirements and will be treated as a serious issue.

4. USE OF MOBILE DEVICES BY PUPILS

'Mobile devices' includes mobile phones, tablets, smart watches and ear phones. The list of mobile devices is not exhaustive and the school reserves the right to confiscate items that are deemed to be inappropriate.

The school's policy is that mobile phones are not permitted during the school day. We have ensured our timetable allows students to hand in and collect their mobile phones at the beginning and end of the school day. In addition, we have systems and processes for the safe storage of mobile phones during the school day. We understand pupils may need to have a mobile phone for their journey to and from school, therefore, we have measures for pupils to hand in phones to be stored securely. All such equipment, including air-pods, must be switched off during the school day and be handed in to the Form Tutor during morning tutor time. This will be kept in the classroom safe until collection at the end of the school day during afternoon tutor time. Each pupil will be given a named plastic zipped wallet.

The school takes no responsibility for mobile telephones or other electronic equipment. Should a pupil need to access a telephone in an emergency they may use the telephone in Student Reception, Main Reception or ask their Year Group Office.

Musicians (who start their day earlier) and pupils who have sports fixtures on the day (who may leave school earlier), will hand their phone in to the Main Reception until the end of the day. Pupils who arrive late to school must hand in their phone into Main Reception or their Year Group Office. If pupils are on a school trip, they may take a mobile phone, but this is for emergencies only. All phones are insured by parents/carers own insurance policy as they will not be covered by the school's personal effects insurance.

Should a parent/carer need to contact their child they should phone Main Reception on 01234 290200.

If a pupil refuses to hand over their mobile device or is caught with this during the school day we will sanction accordingly. The exception to the above will be Year 12 and 13 who are permitted to use mobile phones for study in the Sixth Form areas only.

4.1 Sanctions

If a student is found to be in possession of their mobile device during the school day they will be confiscated as permitted under sections 91 and 94 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#). Any member of staff is permitted to do this and then ensure it is handed in to Main Reception or the Year Group Office as soon as possible. Students will receive a sanction of Internal Exclusion for one day as outlined in our Behaviour for Learning Policy.

If a student is deemed to be in possession of their mobile device but is denying they have it the staff will undertake a search as set out in the [DfE's guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation](#) (July 2022). Additionally, the DfE guidance allows us to search a pupil's phone if we have reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury.

If a member of staff finds inappropriate content on a pupil's phone, or if they suspect inappropriate behaviour, then this will be reported to our Education and Diversion Officer linked to Bedfordshire Police. In addition, parents/carers will be informed.

Certain types of conduct, such as bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. As a school we take such conduct extremely seriously, and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos).
- Up skirting.
- 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.

5. USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) 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's a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child.

- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent.
- 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 or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers.
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could help identify a pupil.

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

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.

6. LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

Pupils bringing phones to school must ensure they are placed in the provided and appropriately labelled plastic wallet and handed to their Form Tutor, Head of Year or Main Reception in order to be stored securely for the duration of the school day.

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.

The school 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 and from school.

Confiscated phones will be stored in Main Reception or the Year Group Office in a secure safe.

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

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing this policy annually, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils.
- Feedback from teachers.
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents.
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the Curriculum and Standards sub-committee.

8. APPENDIX 1: ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT (PUPILS)

Acceptable use agreement (Pupils)

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone to school:

1. You must hand in your switched off mobile phone at the beginning of each day to your Form Tutor. You are expected to place it in the provided named zip wallet so that it can be placed in the safe. The same rules apply if you hand in your mobile phone to Main Reception or your Year Group Office.
2. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils without their consent.
3. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
4. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
5. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - Email
 - Text/messaging app
 - Social media
6. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
7. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone even when you aren't in school.
8. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
9. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.
10. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to hand over your phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
11. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store these appropriately once you have entered the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

9. APPENDIX 4: INFORMATION SLIP FOR VISITORS (ISSUED WHEN SIGNING IN)

Use of mobile phones in our school

Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate while on the school grounds.

Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone please go to a space where students will not see or hear you.

Do not take photos or recordings of pupils (unless it is your own child) or staff.

Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

The school accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from the school office.