

# Mobile Phone Policy



THE EARLS HIGH SCHOOL  
AD 1652

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# Contents

1. Preface.....	3
2. Consultation .....	3
3. Relevant guidance.....	3
4. Use of mobile phones by staff .....	4
5. Use of mobile phones by students .....	5
6. Use of mobile phones by parents / carers, volunteers, and visitors on site .....	6
7. Roles and responsibilities .....	6
8. Workload impact assessment .....	7
9. Data Protection Law .....	7
10. Linked policies .....	7
11. Monitoring and review.....	8

## 1. Preface

At The Earls, we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, tablets and smart watches, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. We understand that many parents will want to be able to contact their children as they become more independent at secondary school, and that students often feel safer when travelling to and from school if they have their phone with them. We also recognise the value of our Class Charts app in supporting our students to manage their school day.

However, mobile phone use in school can also bring challenges for both students and staff, such as

- risks to child protection and safeguarding, for example through the sharing of personal information and photos
- online bullying, social exclusion and harassment
- potential for lesson disruption
- reduced ability to focus on learning activities
- reduced opportunities to develop conversation and social skills
- data protection issues
- risk of theft, loss, or damage

We are committed to providing an environment that is conducive to learning, where lessons remain free from distraction, and students are able to concentrate fully on their studies. We recognise the growing weight of evidence that highlights the harmful effects of mobile phones on mental health and wellbeing, especially among teenagers, and the damage to positive social interactions in school.

The purpose of our mobile phone policy is to set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents/carers and visitors. We will not tolerate the unauthorised or inappropriate use of mobile phones in school.

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

## 2. Consultation

This policy has been developed in discussion with staff with a variety of roles and responsibilities.

## 3. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department of Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

## 4. Use of mobile phones by staff

### 4.1. Modelling responsible behaviour

We recognise that mobile phones are an integral part of everyday life for our staff. However, in line with section 4.2 of our [Behaviour Policy](#), we expect staff to model responsible behaviour to our students. We ask staff not to use personal mobile phones when students are present, because:

- it does not set a professional and positive example to students and parents
- it has the potential to impact negatively on the students' learning
- it has the potential to reduce our ability to supervise students effectively and ensure their safety and wellbeing

Staff should ensure that their use of personal mobile phone is at all times in line with the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement and the Stour Vale Staff Code of Conduct.

Under no circumstances should a personal mobile phone/device be used to take photographs of students.

### 4.2. Appropriate use of personal mobile phones for work purposes:

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work purposes, for example when accessing multi-factor authorisation apps. There may also be rare occasions where teaching staff use their personal mobile phone to take registers via Class Charts and access urgent emails. In such cases, mobile phones should not remain visible once the necessary activity has been completed.

### 4.3. Staff use of school devices

Some members of staff in school, for example, site staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead, may be issued with a school mobile phone, where they need to use one as part of their role. While recognising this, we ask these staff to minimise mobile phone use when students are present.

### 4.4. Appropriate use of personal mobile phones

The use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present (such as the staffroom). Staff should be mindful of colleagues when using phones.

There may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their mobile phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance:

- for emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- in the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- the management of a medical condition

This should be discussed with the appropriate Line Manager or the Headteacher.

### 4.5. Staff use of personal mobile phones on educational visits and residential visits

While on an educational visit, staff are acting in loco parentis, and therefore need to ensure that appropriate supervision is in place at all times. Staff should not ordinarily access their personal mobile phones while directly supervising students, except in an emergency. Staff will be given a school mobile phone for the purpose of contacting students, parents and school as needed.

Particularly when school trips run outside of normal working hours, or when they are not directly supervising students, we recognise that staff will want to access their mobile phones, but this should be done in a responsible and professional manner.

#### **4.6. Communication with parents and outside agencies**

Staff should not use personal mobile phones to communicate with parents or outside agencies except in an emergency and must not give out their personal phone number for this purpose. If using their phone in an emergency, staff should ensure that their Caller ID is not visible (their phone number is not displayed).

### **5. Use of mobile phones by students**

#### **5.1. Bringing phones to school**

Students are strongly encouraged leave their mobile phones at home, but if they choose to bring one to school, or on an education visit, it is at their own risk. This means it is the student's responsibility to keep it safe, and the school will not accept responsibility for loss, damage or theft on the school premises, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school.

#### **5.2. Management of phones during the school day**

Mobile phones must not be seen or heard from the bell at the start of the day at 8:40am, until students are dismissed at 2:55pm. Phones must be fully powered down and kept in bags, not pockets. The same rules apply to headphones/earphones. Where students wear a smartwatch, notifications and connectivity should be disabled. This will usually be the case automatically when the phone is powered down.

Students must not use their mobile phones at all during the school day, including during lessons, the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes. For example, it is not acceptable for phones to be used:

- to check the time
- to check timetables on Class Charts
- to contact parents or carers

Students needing to contact home in an emergency should go to their Year Co-ordinator's office or Student Reception where they will be supported to use a school telephone.

Students remaining after school for a detention must not access their phone until they have been dismissed.

#### **5.3. Exceptions on medical grounds**

Where students require access to their mobile phone for the direct management of a medical condition, such as those who wear a glucose monitor for diabetes, we will permit its use during the school day.

We expect these students to act responsibly in accordance with any individual agreements made. Parents or carers should contact the Headteacher to request such permission.

#### **5.4. Confiscation of mobile phones**

If a phone is seen or heard during the school day or found to be in a student's pocket, staff will confiscate it as a prohibited item.

Where a member of staff confiscates a mobile phone, it should be taken directly to Main Reception (or on-call should be requested to collect it) where it will be stored in a locked cabinet. Students may collect their phone at 3:05pm from the Dining Hall. Parents may be required to collect the phone from Reception where a phone is confiscated on repeated occasions.

Lost phones should be handed to any member of staff, who should take it to Reception. The school will attempt to contact the owner where possible.

#### **5.5. Sanctions**

Students must follow our rules on mobile phones. We expect students to follow instructions from any member of staff without question, including requests to hand over their phone. Where a student does not adhere to our expectations, sanctions will apply.

### **6. Use of mobile phones by parents / carers, volunteers, and visitors on site**

We ask our visitors to refrain from using their mobile phones when students are present. If this is unavoidable, they must ensure that they:

- do not take pictures or recordings of students
- do not use phones in lessons, or when working with students

We ask contractors to ensure that they remain professional in their use of mobile phones on site.

Visitors will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

### **7. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **7.1. Staff**

All staff (including teachers, support and supply staff) are responsible for consistently enforcing this policy. Staff will follow our agreed procedures when challenging any mobile phone use.

Leaders will ensure that they clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting mobile phones in school to students, parents, and visitors, and ensure that all stakeholders understand the expectations of them regarding the use of mobile phones in school, and will address concerns from parents and carers promptly.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

## 7.2. Students

Students must ensure that they understand our expectations regarding the use of mobile phones at school and should speak to a member of staff if they are unsure.

Students must meet our expectations regarding the use of mobile phones at school, as set out above. We expect students to respond politely to staff who are enforcing these expectations.

## 7.3. Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers have a vital role to play in supporting our mobile phone policy. We ask that they:

- discuss the school's expectations with their child(ren) to ensure that they understand them
- support our policy that mobile phones must not be seen or heard during the school day
- do not contact their child(ren) via their mobile phone during the school day - all contact, including in an emergency, should be made via Reception
- support any necessary sanctions

## 7.4. Governors

Governors will ensure that the school has a clear policy on the use of mobile phones and will satisfy themselves that the policy is monitored and reviewed as per section 9.

## 8. Workload impact assessment

Reception staff will be responsible ensuring the secure storage of mobile phones during the school day. Other duties linked to new procedures fall within current staff responsibilities.

Workload associated with this policy will be reviewed alongside the policy itself.

## 9. Data Protection Law

This policy adheres to the principles under Data Protection Law. For further information please review schools Data Protection policy published on school's website.

## 10. Linked policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Behaviour policy](#)
- ICT Acceptable Use agreement
- [Data protection policy](#)

## 11. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour, and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will consider:

- feedback from parents and students
- feedback from school staff
- records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority, or other relevant organisations



## Appendix A: Consequences of unacceptable use of mobile phones by students

- a. If a student's mobile phone is seen or heard during the school day, or is seen to be in their pocket, the phone will be confiscated immediately by the member of staff. The phone will be taken to Main Reception by the member of staff, or on-call staff, at the earliest opportunity and locked away.
- b. If a mobile phone is confiscated more than once, we may ask a parent or carer to collect the phone from school.
- c. If a student repeatedly fails to meet our expectations, for a set period of time they will be required to take their mobile phone to their Year Co-Ordinator at the start of the day. It will be stored in Main Reception and may be collected from the Dining hall at 3:05pm.
- d. We expect students to follow our policy on mobile phones, and to respond to instructions from any member of staff without argument. Refusal to comply will be dealt with in accordance with our Behaviour Policy.
- e. Where we have good reason to do so, for example if we believe that a student's phone contains inappropriate images, or that it has been used to commit an offence or harm to another person, we may search the phone, in accordance with the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).
- f. Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes 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)
  - Upskirting
  - 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
- g. Further sanctions may be applied, in line with our Behaviour Policy. In each case, we will also consider whether:
  - There are any relevant special circumstances (for example, age, religious requirements, special educational needs, disability)
  - The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)