



Mobile Phone Policy

Document Review

Trustees approval Date:	21st March 2024
Committee Responsible:	Local Governing Body
Next Review Date: (2 years)	March 2026

Equality Statement

Wrotham School strongly promotes equality of opportunity under all circumstances and in all contexts. We actively seek to ensure that all members of our community and all visitors to the school are treated equally. This includes actively ensuring that discrimination or inequality of any kind does not occur on the basis of the following: - Race - Nationality - Gender (including transgender). - Sexual Orientation - Disability - Age - Mental Health - Marital Status.

Discrimination and in equality can be experienced in the following ways, not exclusively: - Inappropriate or offensive language and terminology. - Cultural misrepresentation - Violence/ physical harm. - Bullying - Online Abuse - Disadvantage in all aspects of progress, care and opportunity.

When inequality or discrimination is seen or reported the school will strongly challenge and will work to resolve the issue. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fully and without prejudice.

Introduction:

(from Government guidance)

Every school has a duty to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so all pupils, whatever their background, can learn and thrive. One of the greatest challenges facing schools is the presence of mobile phones. Today, by the age of 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone.

Mobile phones risk unnecessary distraction, disruption and diversion. One in three secondary school pupils report that mobile phones are used in most lessons without permission.

This not only distracts the single pupil using the phone, but disrupts the lesson for a whole class, and diverts teachers' efforts away from learning. We owe it to our children to do what we can to remove distractions and enable them to be fully present and engaged in the classroom. We also owe it to our pupils to keep them safe at school. One in five pupils have experienced bullying online.

At Wrotham School:

We strongly believe that mobile phones have no place in school and their use can actively disrupt academic and social learning. The majority of our parent and student views reflect our views on this.

The school has been clear that social media use, often accessed by mobile phones presents the single most significant risk to young people's safety, mental health and wellbeing. For these reasons we do not support or endorse the use of social media by children.

Wrotham School has a comprehensive education programme on how to stay safe online and deliver this in form groups and curriculum lessons throughout the year.

We recommend that students do not bring mobile phones to school. However, as a rural school with many young people making significant journeys home we do understand where and why this may be important for their safety.

This policy has been designed in line with government guidance (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf5f2a4239310011b7b916/Mobile_phones_in_schools_guidance.pdf), in consultation with staff and students. This has ensured that this policy reflects the needs of students, staff and parents.

Our expectations regarding mobile phone use are clear:

Year 7-11 Students:

- Must not use mobile phones on school site between the hours of 08:00 and 15:00. This includes before school on the playground.
- Mobile Phones must be switched off and placed out of sight at all times.
- **Anyone caught using a mobile phone within school hours will have this item confiscated until the end of the day when it can be collected from reception.**
- Repeated use of mobile phones will result in more serious sanctions being put in place. This may include having to hand in your phone on arrival to site each morning.

- Students must not use mobile phones in lessons unless instructed to by the teacher in exceptional circumstances. (For example – to complete a school survey in a supervised classroom).
- When leaving a classroom for “time out” or for toilet use, you will be required to leave your mobile phone with the teacher.
- Students must not take pictures or videos of other students at any time and doing so may result in serious sanctions being applied.
- Students must not access social media during the school day for any reason.
- Where these rules are repeatedly breached, the school may require a child to hand their phone in each day at the start of school and be subject to further unannounced bag searches to ensure multiple devices are not being used.
- Continued breaking of these clear rules could lead to serious sanction, as per our behaviour policy. This could include suspension and exclusion from school for serious breaches.
- The school does not condone or support the use of social media by any child under the age of 16. The school has been clear on why this is such a significant risk to child safety in communications with parents and in classroom provision.

Year 12 and 13 students:

- Sixth form students should use their phones in an appropriate way at all times.
- We expect 6th form students to manage this behaviour themselves as appropriate and will receive clear warning and sanction if this expectation is not met.
- Mobile phones can be used in study time for educational purposes. If a student is found to be using their phone for any other purposes in the study centre the phone will be confiscated for the remainder of that session.
- Repeated or serious misuse of a mobile phone will result in further, more serious sanction in line with our behaviour policy.

Exceptional circumstances:

- The school will inform parents and students of any exceptions to these rules such as on school trips.
- If there are clear medical reasons, supported by medical evidence, certain student may be given exemption from these rules – for example diabetes management. Where this is the case an individual plan will be made as part of our medications policy making clear these exceptions and exemptions.

Parents:

- For safeguarding reasons parents should refrain from using mobile phones on school site.
- Parents **must not** call their child during the school day, they will not be able to answer. Doing so may cause your child to break the school rules and receive a sanction.
- The school will not enter discussions or negotiate the rules on mobile phone use in school.
- We regularly write to parents to keep them up to date on how to keep their child safe online.
- We expect parents to support their child’s safety and well-being by monitoring use of mobile phones and social media outside of school to keep their child safe.
- Emergency messages to your child should be delivered by calling the school directly or emailing the school. We will ensure this is passed on as appropriate.

- Parents are expected to model healthy mobile phone and social media outside of school.

Staff:

- All staff should consistently enforce the school's policy on the use of mobile phones. Staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. Mobile phones should only be used by staff during the day for work based reasons.
- Staff must challenge pupils to meet the school expectations and effectively enforce the prohibition of mobile phones throughout the school day. There may be occasions where it is appropriate for a teacher to use a mobile phone or similar device, for instance to issue homework, issue rewards and sanctions or use multi-factor authentication. This should always be for professional purposes.

Confiscation/ searching

The following is protected by law:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf5f2a4239310011b7b916/Mobile_phones_in_schools_guidance.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62d1643e8fa8f50bfbefa55c/Searching_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf

- The school will not accept responsibility financially or otherwise for any damage or loss of mobile phones in school, this includes when confiscated by the school. Bringing a mobile phone to school is "at own risk". This is protected in law.
- The school and its staff retain the right to search and confiscate mobile phones without parental permission. We consider mobile phones to be prohibited as per this policy. If we suspect a child may be using a mobile phone inappropriately or during the school day we reserve the right to search and confiscate any device.
- In the case of unlawful use of a mobile device the school may be required to confiscate an item and pass this to the police as evidence.

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