

Easthampstead Park Community School

Mobile Phone Policy



To be read in conjunction with E-safety and Anti-bullying Policies

1. Background

1.1 Mobile phones and, in particular, the new generation of smartphones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as an integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and other functions such as access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter and blogging sites. For many young people today the ownership of a mobile phone is considered a necessary and vital part of their social life. When used creatively and responsibly the smartphone has great potential to support a students' learning experiences, the school has monitored over the last two years how students have been coping with this responsibility and have identified some concerns. Recent research does not support the extensive use and access to phones by teenagers as being helpful to their progress. One study published by the London School of Economics traced the impact of banning mobile phones at schools on exam scores. Researchers found that students in schools with phone bans earned higher test scores and that low-performing students benefited the most. "Restricting mobile phone use can be a low-cost policy to reduce educational inequalities," concludes the study.

Another study published in the Journal of Communication Education found that students without mobile phones performed better in several different areas. They wrote down 62 percent more information in their notes, were able to recall more detailed information from class. Research published by the University of Chicago found that even if cell phones are turned off, turned face down or put away, their mere presence reduces people's cognitive capacity. Over-reliance on phones has been thought to increase young person anxiety and can promote hyper-vigilance which is not positive for mental health. As a consequence, the school will from September 2019 ban the presence of phones in school for students in Years 7 to 11 inclusive from 8.50 until 15.10

2. Mobile phones in school - roll call

2.1 Bringing and having your phone in school is considered a privilege there is no necessity for students to have a phone in school. The school does appreciate for many parents their children having access to a phone on the journey to and from school is desirable. However once on the school site the children are in a safe environment and do not need to have access to their phone.

2.2 All students in Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 **must** hand in their mobile phone during am tutor (roll call) as they are not permitted to have mobile phones in their possession. The phone should be silenced and notifications turned off.

2.3 Students arriving late (after roll call) will be expected to hand their phone into Raising Standards for safekeeping

2.4 Students who have a planned appointment example the dentist must let their tutor know then hand their phone into Raising Standards for collection at the appropriate time (when signing out of school)

2.3 Parents and students should be clear that the misuse of mobile phones will not be tolerated and failure to hand your phone in and keep it on your person will be treated seriously by the school as it is in clear breach of our rule. Parents wanting to communicate with their child during the times the phones are held by the school should go through the school office.

3. Dealing with breaches

3.1 Misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the principle of “**see it, hear it, and take it**”. If a student is found in possession of mobile phone between 8.50am and before the end of the school day at 3.10 it will be confiscated. Communication will be made with home and a parent/carer will be responsible for visiting the school to collect the mobile phone by appointment. The mobile phone will not be returned to student unless in an extreme circumstance. If students fail to adhere to this the same principles set out in the school behaviour policy, will be applied with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse or defiance.

3.2 Students will be made aware that serious misuse will lead to the confiscation of their mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school. The rule will be made clear by pastoral staff through assemblies and a copy of the rule around the use of the phone specifically the strategy of see it, hear it take it provided in the student planner. If the offence is serious it will be reported to the police.

3.3 Where it is deemed necessary to examine the contents of a mobile phone this will be done by a designated member of staff. 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. Misuse of phones outside of 8.50 to 3.15

4.1 In recent years we have had incidents of poor conduct where mobile phone use has been a feature. This has been particularly difficult to address if it is an element in bullying.

4.2 Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however, bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage.

4.3 The following are examples of misuse but are not exclusive. ‘Misuse’ will be at the discretion of the Headteacher:

- 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 and email messaging
- The use of a mobile phone 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 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 phones in lessons
- Students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

5. Unacceptable use

5.1 The school will consider any of the following to be unacceptable use of the mobile phone and a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in sanctions being taken.

- Photographing, recording or filming staff or other students without their knowledge or permission
- Photographing, recording or filming in toilets, changing rooms and similar areas
- 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
- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff (see it, hear it, take it) or during roll call
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and students will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time

- Using a mobile phone outside school hours in such a way that it undermines the stability of the school and compromises its ability to fulfil the stated aim of providing 'a clear moral and ethical lead'.

6. Sanctions

6.1 Students and parents are notified that appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines, following the school's behaviour policy.

6.2 In addition:

- Students and their parents should be very clear that the school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached.
- If a phone is confiscated, the school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Students should be aware that the police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected
- If a student commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another student or member of staff the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act when deciding the sanction.

7. Confiscation procedure; see it, hear it, take it.

7.1 If a mobile phone is confiscated then:

- a. the students will be informed that the phone has been taken to the Raising standards office for safekeeping where arrangements will be made for a parent/carer to collect the phone by appointment. (it will not be returned to the student without contact having been made with the parent or carer)
- b. the confiscation will be recorded for monitoring purposes logged on ClassCharts
- c. school will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in such a way that it is returned to the correct person

8. Persistent possession of Mobile phone

8.1 Where a student persistently breaches the expectations, following a clear warning, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may impose further sanctions in line with the school behaviour policy including the imposition of other sanctions up to and including exclusion from school.

9. Where the phone has been used for an unacceptable purpose

9.1 The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored in 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.

9.2 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

9.3 School will consider whether an incident should be reported to the safeguarding team or police

9.4 The designated staff member should monitor repeat offences to see if there is any pattern in the perpetrator or the victim which needs further investigation.

Reviewed

July 2019

Responsibility for Implementation and Review:

Deputy Headteacher
Student Support Committee

Date of Next Review:

Summer 2020