

Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy (for Students in Years 7-13)



William Hulme's Grammar School
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1. Purpose

The widespread ownership of mobile phones among young people requires that school administrators, teachers, students, parents and carers take steps to ensure that mobile phones are used responsibly at schools. This Acceptable Use Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile phones can be clearly identified and addressed, ensuring the benefits that mobile phones provide (such as increased safety) can continue to be enjoyed by our students.

WHGS has established the following Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones which provides teachers, students, parents and carers guidelines and instructions for the appropriate use of mobile phones during school hours.

Students, their parents or carers must read and understand the Acceptable Use Policy before students are given permission to bring mobile phones to school.

The Acceptable Use Policy for mobile phones also applies to students during school excursions, camps and extra-curricular activities.

2. Rationale

Personal Safety and Security

WHGS accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. There is also increasing concern about children travelling alone on public transport or commuting long distances to school. It is acknowledged that providing a child with a mobile phone gives parents reassurance that they can contact their child if they need to speak to them urgently.

3. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.

The decision to provide a mobile phone to their children should be made by parents or carers.

Parents/carers should be aware if their child takes a mobile phone to school.

Pupils are responsible for keeping the school informed of their current mobile phone number.

4. Acceptable Uses

Mobile phones should be switched off and kept out of sight at all times during the school day. Exceptions may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances if the parent/carer specifically requests it. Such requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis and should be directed to the Director of KS3 or KS4.

Parents/carers are reminded that in cases of emergency, the school Reception remains a vital and appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.

While on school premises, students' mobile phones should be switched off in all locations and at all times during the school day.

Sixth Form students are permitted to use their mobile phones within the confines of the Sixth Form Centre only. Once Sixth Form students access areas of the campus other than the Sixth Form Centre, mobile phones should not be visible and not be used. Sixth Form students should not use mobile phones in the lesson except with the express permission of the member of staff present. Students are permitted to listen to music during private study in the Sixth Form Centre only, but mobile phones should not be visible unless they are being used for essential work.

Students should protect their phone numbers by only giving them to friends and keeping a note of who they have given them to. This can help protect the student's number from falling into the wrong hands and guard against the receipt of insulting, threatening or unpleasant voice, text and picture messages.

5. Unacceptable Uses

Mobile phones must not be used to access the Internet at any time on the school site, unless directed to do so by staff for the purposes of age-appropriate research to support learning. It is expected that this will only occur in Sixth Form lessons, if at all.

Unless express permission is granted, mobile phones should not be used to make calls, send SMS messages, take photos or use any other application during school lessons and other educational activities, such as assemblies.

Mobile phones are only to be used in the event of an emergency and with the permission of a member of staff.

On Educational Visits, guidance on the use of mobile phones will be given in advance by the members of staff accompanying the visit. Pupils must not use their mobile phones on an Educational Visit without the permission of a member of staff, including during transport on a coach or a school minibus. This AUP will continue to apply during Educational Visits.

The Bluetooth function of a mobile phone must be switched off at all times and not be used to send images or files to other mobile phones.

Mobile phones must not disrupt classroom lessons with ringtones, music or beeping.

Using mobile phones to bully and threaten other students is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. In some cases, it can constitute criminal behaviour.

It is forbidden for students to "gang up" on another student and use their mobile phones to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website for public viewing. This also includes using mobile phones to photograph or film any student without his or her consent. This rule also applies when pupils are on school trips or excursions.

It is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced. Any incidents of this nature which occur outside school may result in the police being informed.

Mobile phones are not to be used or taken into changing rooms or toilets or used in any situation that may cause embarrassment or discomfort to fellow students, staff or visitors to the school.

6. Theft or Damage

Students should mark their mobile phone clearly with their names.

Students who bring a mobile phone to school should leave it locked away in their locker/bag when they arrive. To reduce the risk of theft during school hours, students who carry mobile phones are advised to keep them well concealed and not 'advertise' that they have them.

Mobile phones which are found in the school, and whose owner cannot be located, should be handed to Main Reception in the Donner Centre.

The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones.

The school accepts no responsibility for students losing or having their mobile phones stolen while travelling to and from school.

It is strongly advised that students use passwords/pin numbers to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones (eg by other students, or if stolen). Students must keep their password/pin numbers confidential. Mobile phones and/or passwords may not be shared.

Lost and stolen mobile phones in the UK can be blocked across all networks making them virtually worthless because they cannot be used.

7. Inappropriate Conduct

Any student/s caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessments will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal. Under no circumstances should mobile phones be taken into any external examination. This includes those that are turned off within a bag or coat. Any student who is found in possession of a mobile phone will be reported to the appropriate examining body. This may result in the student's disqualification from either that examination or all examinations in that series.

Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal.

Students with mobile phones may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person using SMS messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls. Students using mobile phones to bully other students will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Principal. (It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the Principal is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police).

8. Sanctions

Students who infringe the rules set out in this document will have their phones confiscated by teachers. The mobile phone will be confiscated by the teacher and taken to a secure place. Parents will be notified and the pupil will not be permitted to collect the phone without a parent/carer present. After the second infringement the school will withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the mobile phone to school.

As set out in the previous section, failure to heed the rules set out in this document may result in an alleged incident being referred to the police for investigation. In such cases, the parent or carer would be notified immediately.

Policy Information and Review

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| Designated Lead Person/s | S Galloway, Vice Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| Reviewed | Annually |
| Date of last review and by whom | July 2024 - Mr B A Howarth |
| Nominated Governor (if applicable) | N/A |
| Ratification by Local Governing Body | |
| Next Review Date | July 2025 |

