

MOBILE PHONE POLICY



Blundell's

FOUNDED 1604

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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MOBILE PHONE POLICY

Introduction

1. At Blundell's School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. We also, however, recognise the problems that can come with smart phone use, especially for pupils and teenagers, and therefore understand that the school, like all schools, has an important role to play in protecting pupils from the problems of smart phones and social media, while also educating pupils in their use, and continuing to enable access to technologies which are educationally beneficial.

Aim of this Policy

2. Our policy therefore aims to:
 - a. Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use.
 - b. Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers.
 - c. Support and work in conjunction with school's other policies, including the Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, The School Rules (which includes our Rewards and Sanctions Policy) and Acceptable IT usage policies.
3. This policy also aims to mitigate some of the practical challenges posed by mobile phones in school, such as:
 - a. Data protection issues;
 - b. Potential for lesson disruption; and
 - c. Risk of theft, loss, or damage.

Rationale

4. By the age of 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone, but the use of mobile phones in school can lead to distractions, disruption and can increase the risk of online bullying.
5. The government has introduced guidance which encourages all schools to introduce rules which prohibit the use of phones at school, to help pupils focus on their education, and the friends and staff around them. The guidance may be found at the following link: [Mobile Phones in Schools | February 2024](#)
6. This new guidance says that:
 - a. Schools should prohibit the use of mobile phones, but gives them autonomy on how to do this.
 - b. Schools may allow phones to be brought onto the premises but recommends that they are not used during school hours.
7. This brings England in line with other countries who have put in place similar rules, including France, Italy and Portugal.

8. The guidance sets out that there will be some limited cases where pupils should be exempt from the rules for medical reasons, or because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This will include situations where, for example, a diabetic pupil may need to use their phone as a monitoring device, as required by the Equality Act 2010.
9. The school recognises also that parents/carers in the community feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for the purpose of communication. This helps with pupil welfare and safeguarding, especially in the long dark winter months.
10. Blundell's School supports this approach wholeheartedly, and the policy is written in support of this guidance.
11. However, this policy seeks to enable parents to continue to use mobile phones to communicate with their children also, where appropriate to do so.

Roles and Responsibilities

12. All pupils are responsible for adhering to this policy.
13. All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for adhering to and enforcing this policy.
14. 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.
15. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Online Safety

16. Blundell's is committed to monitoring and managing the use of mobile devices in the context of safeguarding and adhering to our obligations under the Department of Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
17. All mobile phone use at the school must comply with our Acceptable ICT Use Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Use of Mobile Phones by Pupils

18. All pupils bringing a phone onto School premises must provide the school with the make, model and serial number of their phone.

Years 7 and 8

19. Please note that, while storage provision will be made for pupils in Year 7 and 8 who bring phones into school, we do not recommend that Year 7 and 8 Pupils have phones in school at all and that, if they do, they are not smart phones, but much simpler 'brick' type devices that allow only the making/receiving of phone calls and texts.

Years 9 to 11

20. Pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school.

21. Pupils must not use a mobile phone, smart watch or headphones anywhere in school during the school day, except under the specific direction of a teacher.
22. If a pupil brings their phone to the school, then on arrival it must be switched off and kept out of sight by being handed in to the House Parent, or their representative, in House. It should not be carried around school.
23. For the purposes of this policy, the school day begins the moment the pupils enter the school site and ends once the pupils leave the school site. In practice this means:
 - a. Pupils will hand their phone in before 8.25am, and will be able to collect it no earlier than 5.30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.
 - b. On Wednesdays pupils will be able to collect their phones before town leave.
 - c. On Saturdays, pupils will be able to collect their phones after Period 3.
24. Breaches of this policy will result in sanctions being applied to the relevant pupils, as outlined in the School Rules and our Behaviour Management Policy
25. The Head reserves the right to allow phones for selected pupils given individual circumstances, for example a medical condition.

Years 12 and 13

26. Pupils in Year 12 and 13 are encouraged to follow the same guidelines as pupils in Years 9 to 11 above, but will be allowed to carry their phone with them during the day at school providing that:
 - a. They follow the school “invisibility” policy (i.e. phones are never seen around campus)
 - b. Phones are not used in common areas in House or any social events, unless expressly allowed.
 - c. They set a good role model to the younger years in Houses.
27. Phone use on a trip away from school or to a sports match will be at the discretion of the trip organiser and the Second Master. Unless permission is expressly given, phones will not be allowed.

Boarders

28. Since the Boarding House is a pupil’s home overnight, pupils in all year groups who are boarding for that night, whether they be Full, Weekly or Flexi, will be given the opportunity to use their phones at set times in the evenings and at weekends, under the direction of their House Parent, or their representatives.
29. Boarders must follow their House guidelines regarding handing their phones in overnight.

In the Event of an Emergency

30. Pupils who need to contact parents in an emergency should speak to the School Office, their House Parent, or House Matron, who will make a phone available.

The Head's Discretion

31. The Head reserves the right to allow phones for selected pupils given individual circumstances, for example a medical condition.

Sanctions

32. If a phone is seen by a member of staff it will be confiscated by them. Once confiscated, this will be handed in to the School Office where it will be stored safely.
33. School rules on the acceptable use of mobile phones - including on conduct such as bullying, harassment, abusive or sexual behaviour – remain in full effect, and where appropriate will receive sanctions accordingly. Full detail can be found in the School's Behaviour Management, Anti-Bullying and Rewards and Sanctions Policies.
34. School rules on acceptable use of mobile phones - including on conduct such as bullying, harassment, abusive or sexual behaviour – remain in full effect, and where appropriate will receive sanctions accordingly. Full detail can be found in the school's Behaviour Management Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and Rewards and Sanctions Policies.

Use of Mobile Phones by Staff

Personal Mobile Phones

35. Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise involved/employed by the school) are expected to set an example and, wherever possible, adhere to the principle that they do not use their phone in front of pupils, unless for an expressly work purpose, such as:
 - a. Taking a register in class.
 - b. Authentication Apps
 - c. Emergency evacuations
 - d. Supervising off-site trips
 - e. Supervising residential visits
36. In these circumstances, staff will use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

Work Mobile Phones

37. Some members of staff are provided with a mobile phone by the school for work purposes. Only authorised staff are permitted to use school phones, and access to the phone must not be provided to anyone without authorisation.
38. Staff must ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our Staff Code of Conduct.

Use of Mobile Phones by Parents

39. Parents must adhere to this policy as outlined above for staff, if they are on the school site during the school day.

40. Parents will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.
41. In particular, parents must:
 - a. Not take pictures or recordings of pupils, unless it is a public event, or of their own child; and
 - b. Use any photographs or recordings for personal use only;
 - c. Not post pictures or recordings on social media without the school's consent.

Use of Mobile Phones by Volunteers and Visitors

42. Visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as outlined above for staff, if they are on the school site during the school day.

Use of Mobile Phone to Contact Pupils

43. Parents are asked to use the School Office, or their pupil's House Parent or Matron as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child/ren during the school day. We have a well-established and efficient system for getting messages to pupils and pastoral support if it is needed. They should not try to contact their child/ren on their personal mobile during the school day.
44. Parents wishing to contact their child after the school day should ring their House Parent, or House Matron.

Loss, Theft or Damage of Mobile Phones

45. Mobile phones are personal possessions and must be protected from loss, theft or damage accordingly, either by their owner or, in the event that they have been surrendered to a member of staff, by the school.
46. Mobile phones that have been confiscated will be stored in the School Office in a secure location.
47. Mobile phones that are found unattended on school premises should be returned to the School Office.

Monitoring and Review

48. The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations.

END

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