MOBILE PHONE POLICY



Blundell's

FOUNDED 1604

MOBILE PHONE POLICY

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POLICY AMENDMENTS

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1st June 2024	New Policy Introduced
1st January 2025	Format Updated
20th January 2025	Updated to clarify use on school trips.
3rd September 2026	**5.** Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default and that anything other than this should be by exception only. Department for Education guidance expects pupils not to have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime. **6.** Blundell's supports this approach. Pupils may bring a mobile phone to school where this is needed for travel, communication outside the school day or boarding, but the default position is that pupils will not have access to their phone during the school day. **7.** Individual exceptions may be agreed where there is a medical, SEND, disability, safeguarding or other compelling welfare reason. Any such exception will be agreed by the School and will specify when and how the device may be used. **8.** Different arrangements apply outside the school day for boarding pupils, under the direction of House staff. **15**. Blundell's is committed to managing the use of mobile devices in the context of safeguarding. The School maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on school networks, in accordance with the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standard.

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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 us.

    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. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default and that anything other than this should be by exception only. Department for Education guidance expects pupils not to have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including during lessons, between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtime.

6. Blundell's supports this approach. Pupils may bring a mobile phone to school where this is needed for travel, communication outside the school day or boarding, but the default position is that pupils will not have access to their phone during the school day.This

brings England in line with other countries who have put in place similar rules, including France, Italy and Portugal.

7. Individual exceptions may be agreed where there is a medical, SEND, disability, safeguarding or other compelling welfare reason. Any such exception will be agreed by the School and will specify when and how the device may be used.

8. Different arrangements apply outside the school day for boarding pupils, under the direction of House staff. 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.

9. Blundell's School supports this approach wholeheartedly, and the policy is written in support of this guidance.

10. 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

11. All pupils are responsible for adhering to this policy.

12. All staff (including teachers, support staff, and supply staff) are responsible for adhering to and enforcing this policy.

13. 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.

14. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for monitoring the policy, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

ONLINE SAFETY

15. Blundell's is committed to managing the use of mobile devices in the context of safeguarding. The School maintains appropriate filtering and monitoring systems on school networks, in accordance with the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standard

16. All mobile phone use at the school must comply with our Acceptable ICT Use Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY PUPILS

On School Premises

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

18. Additional guidance is as follows:

Years 7 and 8

a. 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

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

c. 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.

d. 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.

e. 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:

    i. 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.

    ii. On Wednesdays pupils will be able to collect their phones before town leave.

    iii. On Saturdays, pupils will be able to collect their phones after Period 3.

Years 12 and 13

f. 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:

    i. They follow the school “invisibility” policy (i.e. phones are never seen around campus)

    ii. Phones are not used in common areas in House or any social events, unless expressly allowed.

    iii. They set a good role model to the younger years in Houses.

Boarders

g. 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.

h. Boarders must follow their House guidelines regarding handing their phones in overnight.

In the Event of an Emergency

i. 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.

On School Trips

19. For all pupils, 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.

20. Unless permission is expressly given, phones will not be allowed.

The Head's Discretion

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

Sanctions

22. 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.

23. If a phone is being used in breach of this policy, it may be confiscated by a member of staff. Once confiscated, it will be handed in to the School Office where it will be stored safely.

24. School rules and safeguarding procedures relating to bullying, harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (including AI-generated or digitally altered images), and other forms of online abuse apply irrespective of whether the conduct takes place using a school-owned or personal device.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES BY STAFF

Personal Mobile Phones

25. 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

26. 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

27. 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.

28. 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

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

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

31. 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 VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

32. 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 PHONES TO CONTRACT PUPILS

33. 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.

34. Parents wishing to contact their child after the school day should ring their House Parent, or House Matron.

LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE TO MOBILE PHONES

35. 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.

36. Mobile phones that have been confiscated will be stored in the School Office in a secure location.

37. Mobile phones that are found unattended on school premises should be returned to the School Office.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

38. 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 organisation.

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