



**St Edward's
School**

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Mobile phone and electronic communications policy 2021-22

Reviewed and Approved by the Business and Premises Committee

On: 2nd November 2021

Reviewed and Ratified by Full Governing Body

On: 9th December 2021

Next review date: Summer 2022

SLT and Directors of Learning are responsible for the implementation and oversight of this Policy

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1. Introduction and aims

At St Edward's School we recognise that mobile devices, including mobile phones and SMART watches, are an important part of everyday life for our students, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community.

This policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices for students, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

This policy also aims to address some of the challenges posed by mobile devices in school, such as:

- Risks to child protection
- Circumventing of school authority and processes
- Data protection issues
- Potential for lesson disruption
- Risk of theft, loss, or damage
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Staff

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

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.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the policy via Directors of Learning every 2 years, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

3. Use of mobile phones by students

St. Edward's school does not permit the use of mobile phones by students for any purpose on its site.

St. Edward's school understands that some parents and carers wish their child to carry a mobile phone for use outside of the schools premises. In such circumstances, mobile phones must be switched off during school hours, and kept securely in the student's bag, locker or blazer. St. Edward's school will not accept responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen phones, and will not invest significant time in managing such instances.

If parents and carers wish to contact their child during open hours, or vice versa, all calls must be via the School Office.

4. Use of SMART watches by students

SMART watches are often high value items, and the school does not recommend that they are brought into school. Such watches, insofar as they are capable of recording, communicating and capturing images; represent a similar risk to safeguarding, the orderly running of the school, and disruption to learning as mobile phones; and so are covered under this Policy. They will be treated in the same way as mobile phones if they are used, or seen, in school.

4.1 Sanctions

In accordance with our Behaviour policy (“Promoting Positive Behaviour”) St. Edward’s school expects full cooperation with this policy from students, parents and carers, staff and visitors.

Schools are permitted to confiscate any items prohibited from use in school, including phones, from students under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

If a phone is seen in use, or if there is evidence that a phone has been used, it will be confiscated and kept in the School Office until the end of the school day on the first offence a log of the confiscation will be made, and a further instance within a term, or at the discretion of a senior member of staff, will require a parent or carer to collect the phone from the school. Refusal to hand over an item for confiscation to a member of staff will be treated as defiance; and thus a serious breach of the school’s behaviour code.

If a student uses a mobile phone to contact parents or carers in order to get their version of events in first; or if such a call requires staff time for subsequent management; then a range of sanctions may be used from a C5 detention to fixed-term exclusion.

Staff at St. Edward’s school have the authority to search a student’s mobile phone without consent if they have reason to believe that the phone contains pornographic images, and/or if it is being, or has been used to commit an offence or cause personal injury, including safeguarding concerns. (DfE guidance on searching, screening and confiscation.

If inappropriate material is found on a phone, or if there is evidence that it has been misused as above, the DSL must be informed at the earliest opportunity; and, if appropriate, the relevant Director of Learning.

School sanctions may be imposed for misuse of social media outside of school.

Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. The school takes such conduct extremely seriously, and will involve the police or other agencies as appropriate. If the Police are required to search a phone, for example if the student refuses to cooperate with staff, or if a crime is suspected; the Police will confiscate the phone and it is likely that it will not be returned.

If criminal or illegal activity is suspected, the school reserves the right to retain any confiscated items until they are reviewed by the Police.

Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting
- Threats of violence or assault
- Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone’s ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- Access to information regarding extremism likely to require a referral to Prevent

5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors

Parents, visitors and volunteers (including governors and contractors) must adhere to this policy as it relates to staff if they are on the school site during the school day.

This means:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it is a public event (such as a school fair), or of their own child
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use only, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with students

Parents, visitors and volunteers will usually be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school, but this policy stands irrespective of whether or not this has happened.

Parents or volunteers supervising school trips or residential visits must not:

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents
- Take photos or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for students using their phones, as set out in section 4 above.

Parents must use the school office as the first point of contact if they need to get in touch with their child during the school day. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students must secure their electronic device as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions.

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones or any electronic equipment that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to and from school. The school will not invest significant time in managing the loss, theft or damage of any item that it recommends is not brought to school.

All parents are given a copy of this policy via the form tutor, and their attention is drawn to it via school communication.

Confiscated items will be stored in the school office until parental collection for the second, or subsequent offences.

Lost phones that are subsequently found should be returned to the school office. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

7. Monitoring and review

The school is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

- Feedback from parents and students

- Feedback from teachers and other staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations

8. Appendix 1: Code of conduct/acceptable use agreement for students

You must obey the following rules if you bring your mobile phone or SMART watch to school:

1. You may not use your phone until you have left the school site. At the end of the day, as you are approaching traffic, you must not use your phone until you are beyond the entrance to the school.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone or SMART watch in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other students, or at any time whilst on site.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other students without their consent.
5. Avoid sharing your contact details with people you don't know, and don't share other people's contact details without their consent.
6. Don't share your phone's passwords or access codes with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone or SMART watch to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating students or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media

You may be sanctioned for such behaviour if it affects another student, even outside of the school day. Your behaviour may be considered a criminal action, and other families may ask for further action to be taken.

8. Don't use your phone or watch to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'. If you receive an illegal or obscene image you must not forward it. By doing so you may be committing a criminal action. Consult a member of staff immediately. You are likely to be instructed to delete the image, and the Police may be informed.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment, and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone or SMART watch even when you aren't in school.
10. Don't use vulgar, obscene or derogatory language while on the phone or when using social media. This language is not permitted under the school's behaviour policy.
11. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand in, a phone or SMART watch. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly. Staff may request the Police to search your phone if they believe a crime has been committed or if they feel that the phone contains information of a safeguarding or criminal nature.
12. Mobile phones and SMART watches are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store these appropriately, or turn them over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone or SMART watch into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

