



KING EDWARD VI HANDSWORTH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Mobile Phone Policy 2023-24

Document Control

Document Ref:		Date Implemented:	June 2022
Version:	2	Date Modified:	June 2023
Revision due date:	June 2024		
Governor Committee and date (where applicable)	Welfare Committee 6 June 2023		
Reviewed by:	Jane Glendenning	Sign and Date:	
Authorised by:		Sign and Date:	

Related Documents/Policies

Reference	Title
All policies to be found: https://kingedwardvi.bham.sch.uk/about-our-school/safeguarding/	Online Safety Policy
	Anti-bullying policy
	Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between young people Policy
	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
	Behaviour for Learning Policy

Jane Glendenning, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for monitoring the policy every two years, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

CONTENTS

AIMS AND VALUES	2
STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES	3
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
Staff (including teachers, support staff, contractors, volunteers and supply staff) and governors	4
Examining electronic devices	5
Parents/Carers	5
Students	6
Sixth Form Students	7
SCHOOL TRIPS	7
MOBILE PHONE SANCTIONS	7
LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE	8
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW	9

AIMS AND VALUES

This policy will help all stakeholders to achieve the vision of the school, which is that the staff and Governors are committed to the nurture and development of all those who learn here and seek to inspire all to be their best.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where every student can feel:

- safe;
- healthy;
- able to enjoy and achieve;
- able to contribute to future economic well-being; and
- able to make a positive contribution.

EDI STATEMENT

We celebrate diversity and value fairness and equal treatment for everyone at the school regardless of their race, age, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. We promote equality through our rich and diverse curriculum, equipping students with the skills, knowledge and understanding to succeed in a diverse world outside and beyond school. We challenge discrimination in all its forms so that all members of the school community feel safe and valued.

Unconscious Bias Key definitions:

There are two types of bias:

1. **Conscious bias** (also known as **explicit** bias) and

2. **Unconscious bias** (also known as **implicit bias**)

Conscious bias is an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair.

Unconscious bias is implicit bias. It is unintended and subtle, based on unconscious thought. People may have unfair beliefs about others but not be aware of them. Typically unconscious bias happens involuntarily without any awareness or intentional control. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups.

Under the 2010 Equality Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of nine areas termed in the legislation as protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

How to overcome unconscious bias

- Be aware of unconscious bias.
- Don't rush decisions, rather take your time and consider issues properly.
- Justify decisions by evidence and record the reasons for your decisions
- Ensure that everyone knows what kind of behaviour is expected of them.
- Ensure that everyone knows how to report prejudice related incidents.
- Encourage people to work with a wider range of people and get to know them as individuals.
- Focus on the positive behaviour of people and not negative stereotypes.
- Employers should implement policies and procedures which limit the influence of individual characteristics and preferences.

OUR VISION FOR WELLBEING

As a school, in order to prioritise and be committed to the wellbeing of all members of our school community, staff and students are committed to the development of resilience through connectedness, kindness and compassion.

Through the values, ethos and culture we advocate every day in line with our school vision, we aim to develop and nurture students and colleagues with sensitivity and mutual respect.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

To protect the rights of all students and to ensure that they have a safe and secure learning environment, King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls will continuously work towards preventing acts of bullying and harassment as these behaviours are unacceptable and interfere with both our school's ability to educate students and their ability to learn. If such a case arises as a result of the use of a mobile phone, staff will follow guidelines laid out in this policy. This will enable staff to:

- identify students displaying unacceptable behaviour and know how to support them in order that they develop the necessary skills to participate in the school community effectively and positively; and

- keep all other students safe, happy and confident.

At King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls we recognise that mobile phones, and connected devices such as smart watches, are useful to everyday life for our students, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community. As a result, this policy aims to promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use; and set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones and smart watches for students, staff (including supply staff, contractors and volunteers), visitors and parents/carers.

Further reference to “mobile phone” is interchangeable with devices including, but not limited to: smartphones; smart watches; tablets; video cameras; handheld gaming devices; any other device that can connect to the internet and communicate with others.

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

- Risks to child protection;
- Data protection issues;
- Potential for lesson disruption;
- Risk of theft, loss or damage;
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom.

Areas of specific concern include:

- **Safeguarding:** The Department for Education states that, “it is essential that students are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material”. The school uses filters to make sure that students cannot access harmful material on school computers, however, students using mobile phones may be exposed to potentially harmful material without the school being able to protect them or intervene.
- **Student wellbeing:** There is increasing evidence to suggest that social media can have an adverse impact on students’ wellbeing and mental health.
- **Behaviour at school:** We want students to develop socially, as well as academically. By asking students to have their mobile phones turned off and in their lockers, we will encourage them to talk to each other and to take advantage of the activities the school offers during social time.
- **Cyber-bullying** includes the use of technology such as mobile phones to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate or target someone. [Find out more about Cyber bullying from ChildLine](#) and via our website/Safeguarding section. Data from America released on 5 May 2023, shows that students are almost twice as likely to attempt suicide if they have been cyberbullied and 37% of bullying victims develop social anxiety.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff (including teachers, support staff, contractors, volunteers and supply staff) and governors

- All staff are responsible for enforcing this policy. Anyone engaged by the school, must alert a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) if they witness, or are aware of, a breach of this policy by another adult on site.
- If staff have any concerns over the security of their device, they must seek advice from the Data Protection Lead, Mr C Trotter. If they receive inappropriate contact or content, including threats or defamation, they should report to their SLT Link immediately.
- Staff should also keep their mobile phones with them in case of a lockdown on site; a first aid emergency or to contact reception for a member of the safeguarding team on duty.

- Use of personal mobile phones, however, must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where students are not present, e.g. staff work rooms.
- Staff are not permitted to make or receive personal calls, or send texts, while children are present unless there is an emergency, for instance for emergency contact by their child's school; or in the case of acutely ill dependents or family members.
- Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data relating to the school or a student, or any other confidential school information.
- Staff may, at their own discretion, use a personal mobile phone to access their work emails, as long as appropriate privacy settings are enabled. Staff should discuss this with the Data Protection Lead, Mr C Trotter, if necessary.
- Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or students, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. Further details are found in the [Online Safety Policy](#)
- Staff must not use their personal mobile phone to take photographs or recordings of students, their work, or anything else which could identify a student. If it is necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must only be done using school equipment available from the ICT Department.
- In some circumstances, such as during emergency evacuations, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work.
- When supervising residential visits, a school mobile must be used, available from Reception.
- Staff must not use personal phones to contact parents (unless in exceptional circumstances, when 'withheld number' should be used). Contact should always be made via the school office or a school mobile.
- 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.
- Staff members using a work device outside school must not use the device in any way which would violate the school's terms of acceptable use, as set out and agreed in the [Acceptable Use Agreement \(Staff, Governors and Volunteers\)](#)
- Staff should confirm that they have read the School code of conduct by completing the [Code of conduct quiz for staff](#). Staff should therefore be aware that failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Examining electronic devices

School staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for inappropriate images or files on students' electronic devices, including mobile phones, iPads and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so. DfE guidance states that parental/carer consent is not required to search through a young person's mobile phone. Staff may also confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the police. If staff are informed that the image received by a young person is of a sexual nature, the DSL must be alerted and any searches of the device will cease. The DSL will alert CEOP to seek further advice. If necessary, the DSL will contact the police who may:

1. ascertain if there is any coercion involved;
2. do a home visit and speak to parents/carers and the child/young person;
3. search devices;
4. add the information to the secure Child Abuse Image Database (if there is coercion);
5. complete a police report.

Staff in school should not ask for images to be removed on devices, until the police have investigated.

(If a student informs a staff member that they have shared a sexual image or video of themselves they will be advised to contact [Report Remove](#) in order to confidentially report and remove them from the internet.)

When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine data or files on an electronic device, staff must reasonably suspect that the data or file in question has been, or could be, used to:

- Cause harm, and/or
- Disrupt teaching, and/or
- Break any of the school rules.

If inappropriate material (not of a sexual nature) is found on the device, it is up to the staff member in conjunction with the DSL or other member of the senior leadership team to decide whether they should retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline). If the data or files are not suspected to be evidence in relation to an offence, a member of staff may delete the data or files if the continued existence of the data or file is likely to continue to cause harm to any person and the pupil and/or the parent/carer refuses to delete the data or files themselves.

Any searching of students will be carried out in line with the DfE's latest guidance on [screening, searching and confiscation](#) and UKCIS guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) . Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on students' electronic devices will be dealt with through the school complaints procedure.

Parents/Carers

Parents and carers play a crucial role in ensuring that their children understand the need to use the Internet/mobile devices in an appropriate way. Parents should be aware that many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via mobile phone networks. This access means some children can bully or sexually harass their peers via their mobile and smart technology, share indecent images consensually and non-consensually (often via online chat groups) and view and share pornography and other harmful content. Every opportunity will be taken to help parents/carers understand these issues including via the weekly bulletin, parental workshops and in safeguarding information via the school website.

Parents/carers can seek further guidance on keeping children safe online from the following organisations and websites:

- What are the issues? [UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- Hot topics for parents/carers, [Childnet International](#)
- Report a concern to CEOP that a child is being groomed online or sexually exploited www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Get-help/Reporting-an-incident

Parents/carers must contact Reception 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 their personal mobile during the school day as the child is expected to have their phone switched off and out of sight during the school day.

Parents/carers should not take pictures or recordings of students, unless it is a public event (such as a school fair) and only of their own child and should not post on social media without the express consent of the school.

Parents cannot use phones to make recordings of conversations with school staff unless express consent is given by all present.

Students

We recognise that mobile phones play a role in the lives of students outside of school, we would recommend, however, that students only bring a phone into school if they travel to and from school on public transport/Green Bus as School cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage to any personal belongings whilst in school.

Mobile phones must not be used to contact parents/carers. In an emergency, the school will allow students to use the school reception phone to contact parents/carers.

Phones should not be used once on the school premises i.e through the school gates. The only exception is if directed to do so by a member of staff for either teaching and learning purposes or a pastoral need. This is to limit the risk of damage to devices but also to protect students from inappropriate use of technology during the school day.

Having phones switched off will help us to create a safe learning environment for all, and help to prevent opportunities for cyberbullying during the school day.

The rules around mobile devices and examinations are very strict, and the consequences of not following the rules are severe. Students spend much time preparing for, and sitting, formal examinations, including a range of activities within the classroom which also have to be undertaken under exam conditions. If a student is found in possession of a mobile telephone, whether on or off, they risk being disqualified from that examination and may not achieve a grade in that subject.

SCHOOL TRIPS

When on a school trip, a trip leader may authorise the use of mobile phones and headphones on long coach journeys. However, they should only be used to listen to music, they may not be used for communication purposes or to photograph, video or audio record other students or staff.

Staff may authorise the use of mobile phones to take photos of points of interest whilst on a trip. Staff may ask students to contact one another to relay important information in an emergency. However, the trip leader will make it clear to students about what is acceptable use of the mobile device on that trip and this will be agreed and communicated before the trip takes place.

MOBILE PHONE SANCTIONS: YEARS 7-11

It remains the policy for staff in school to challenge any student seen in school with their phone, irrespective of their year group. Any Year 7-11 student who does not follow the guidance will have their phone confiscated immediately; this is not negotiable.

Headphones are subject to the same rules as mobile phones unless a member of staff allows their use in lessons, for educational purposes, whilst plugged into a PC, laptop or other learning equipment. Headphones should not be worn in school from arrival in the morning to departure from the site.

If a student is rude or disrespectful to a member of staff in an attempt to get their phone/headphones back, they will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy.

If a student refuses to hand in their phone to be confiscated, this will be treated as an act of defiance and the student will be sanctioned in line with school policies.

The following sanctions will apply:

Offence 1: The first time in an academic year a student's phone is confiscated it will be retained in Reception until the end of the day. The phone will then be dropped off before school and collected at the end of the day for 5 days. This will be recorded as a negative incident on the student's behaviour record. Parents will be informed and a detention is set for the following Tuesday.

Offence 2: The same routines apply, but confiscation is for 10 days and the detention will be for an hour in the Senior Leadership Team detention the following Thursday.

Offence 3: If a student has their mobile phone confiscated on more than two occasions in an academic year, the school will impose a more serious sanction, which will be determined by a member of the SLT. A meeting with the student, parent(s)/carer(s) will be held with a member of the Pastoral Team to understand the reason for continued use of the phone. This meeting would include the exploration of concerns around cyberbullying or online grooming. The outcome of this meeting will include completion of a signed declaration that the student will adhere to the School's policy. Failure to comply, will result in the School retaining the phone until parents come to collect it. We will expect parents to then make alternative provision for phone usage which may include providing their child with a feature/basic phone that is not internet connected.

Additional response from the School could result in intervention strategies which may include attendance at an online safety course for the student; further parental/child meetings with a member of the Leadership Team; or individual student research on the risk of inappropriate use of mobile phones to produce materials for other students.

We would ask that parents/carers support the decision of the School in implementing the above procedures.

If a student uses any device to take photographs, video or audio recordings without the permission of the subject, the student will be suspended from the school for a fixed period of time. On the student's return, they, and their parent/carers, will be expected to sign a behaviour agreement which will ensure that the student hands in their mobile phone to reception on arrival each morning and collects at the end of school each afternoon for a set period of time. Should a student repeat this misconduct, they risk permanent exclusion from the school.

- The school reserves the right to take action against students involved in any instances where photographs/videos are used for cyberbullying or other bullying purposes, or if this causes disruption to the running of the school, or distress to individual students.
- Certain types of conduct, bullying or harassment can be classified as criminal conduct. 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 Protected Characteristic (see above); bullying or cyberbullying; upskirting.
- Where a student shares images, video or audio recording of another student, member of staff or visitor to the school without their consent, through whatever medium, including, but not limited to, social media, text, email; the school will take this seriously as a safeguarding incident.

The School reserves the right to take appropriate internal action against students involved in any of the above serious misconduct, which will include the full range of sanctions available to the school, including a suspension or permanent exclusion. The School may refer the situation to an external agency, such as the police.

Sixth Form Students

Students may carry their phones with them, but they should be set to 'silent' in order to avoid disruption to others. Photos and videos should only be taken with the consent of those visible, and should not be taken in lessons, supervised study or the Library. Around the school mobile phones must be out of sight and headphones should not be worn. Further details, including sanctions, are available in the 6th form mobile phone policy.

Sixth Form students are able to bring in other devices, such as laptops, which comply with the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) protocols for safe log in and completing work in school.

LOSS, THEFT OR DAMAGE

Students bringing phones and smart watches to school must ensure that these devices are appropriately labelled and as secure as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to a phone's functions.

King Edward VI Handsworth School for Girls does not accept responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or on transport, during school visits or trips, or while students are travelling to or from school. If a student cannot keep their phone safe in their locker during the school day, it should be handed to Reception for safekeeping, not kept on their person.

Confiscated phones will be stored in Reception in a secure cabinet. These will be returned to either the student or parent/carer, as outlined in this policy, at the time stated.

Lost phones should be returned to Reception. The school will then attempt to contact the owner.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school. The Governing Body will monitor incidents that do occur, and review the effectiveness of this policy and the school's behaviour for learning strategies annually. The Governing Body will not condone any inappropriate behaviour and any inappropriate behaviour that impacts on student/staff health, safety and wellbeing will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The DSL will ensure that accurate records of all behaviour incidents are logged on SIMS and CPOMS and reported to the full Local Governing Body termly. Incidents will be analysed by the Pastoral Leaders who will support the DSL in reviewing this policy to assess its implementation and effectiveness and re-design further strategies to improve procedures if necessary.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school's strategy, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the school policy, and that they know how to deal with inappropriate incidents. The Headteacher can also report to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of this Policy on request.

A parent/carer who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with an incident can make a complaint to the Chair of Governors. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy which can be accessed from the school's website.