



MOBILE PHONE POLICY

The Dean Academy

Next Review Date: 2021

1. Introduction

The Dean Academy recognises and accepts that parents/carers give their children mobile phones to protect them from everyday risks involving personal security and safety. Many students travel alone on public transport, commute long distances to school and/or take part in extra-curricular activities outside of normal school hours. It is also acknowledged that, for many young people, the ownership of a mobile phone is considered to be a necessary and vital part of their social life.

Mobile phones, and in particular the new generation of smartphones, such as the iPhone, now include many additional functions such as the integrated camera, video recording capability, instant messaging, mobile office applications and mobile access to the internet. These allow immediate access to email, searching for information on the internet and access to social networking sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

However, the consequences of misuse can be serious.

Bullying, intimidation and harassment are not new in society; however, bullying using a mobile phone represents a new challenge for schools to manage. Examples of misuse include:

- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass or intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook or YouTube;
- Bullying by text, image and email messaging;
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages);
- The posting of material on social networking sites with no thought to the risks to personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others;
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other students;
- General disruption to learning caused by students accessing phones in lessons;
- Students phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with it is compromised;
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable students who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk.

These guidelines outline the expectations of the school on student use of mobile phones. They also give clear guidance to staff, students and parents about the consequences of breaches of these guidelines.

2. Procedure

Before students arrive on the school premises, all phones and devices will need to be switched off and placed into their school bag (not into a pocket), together with any headphones.

- If a phone/tablet is seen during lesson time or around the school, it will be confiscated, placed in a secure envelope and taken to the school reception to be collected at the end of the day.
- The same applies to headphones. Headphones are not to be worn around the neck. They should be placed in bags during the school day.
- If a student refuses to hand their phone over, they will be sent to the referral room at the end of the school day until 4.30pm. Parents will be contacted via phone/email to inform them of this.

3. Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of students who bring mobile phones to school to abide by the guidelines outlined in this document.
- Students should be advised that if they do bring mobile phones (or other such electronic devices) to school, they do so at their own risk. The security of the phone will remain the student's responsibility in all lessons, including PE/Games. All students have access to a locker and, additionally, phones can be handed in at the school office for safe-keeping if marked with the student's name and tutor group.
- Students are discouraged from bringing expensive items to school if it is not necessary to do so. A basic and inexpensive pay-as-you-go mobile phone is advised as the most appropriate.
- In line with police advice, students are advised for personal safety reasons not to display expensive or desirable electronic items in public places, for example on the journey to and from school.
- Education as to responsible use, by students, of mobile technologies will be delivered by the school and included in PSHE and pastoral programmes. Teachers will be vigilant for the misuse of technology in bullying or as part of classroom disruption.
- We encourage parents/carers to talk to their child about appropriate use and security.

4. Emergencies

Students are allowed to carry their personal mobile phones in school but they must be switched off and in their bag.

- Mobile phones must be switched off in all classes, corridors and other areas. It is not acceptable for phones merely to be put on silent mode.
- If a student wishes to make a call or send a text message at any time during the school day, he/she must go to the attendance office who will call on their behalf. Parents/carers are reminded that, in cases of emergency, Student Services remains the most appropriate point of contact and can ensure your child is reached quickly and assisted in any appropriate way.

5. Theft or Damage

- It is advised that mobile phones are insured and marked for easy identification and that a record is kept of the device's serial number.
- Students are encouraged to keep mobile phones locked in lockers.
- Mobile phones that are found in the school and whose owner cannot be located should be handed in to Student Services.

- It is strongly advised that students use passwords/PIN numbers to ensure that unauthorised calls cannot be made from their phones in the event of them being stolen. Passwords/PIN numbers must be kept confidential.
- Lost and stolen mobile phones can be blocked across all networks by contacting the operator with the serial number of the device.

6. Inappropriate Conduct

- Any student caught using a mobile phone to cheat in exams or assessment will face disciplinary action.
- For public examinations, mobile phones are not allowed in the exam room. Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the rules of the exam board.
- It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace or offend another person. As such, in cases of serious misconduct, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the police.
- Students internally isolated are required to hand in their mobile phones for safe keeping. These will be returned to students at the end of their stay in the room, unless other factors make it inappropriate. Should other factors render it necessary, the procedure for confiscation will be followed.

7. Sanctions

- Students who infringe the rules set out in this document could face having their phone confiscated by a member of staff.
- On the first infringement of this policy, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to reception, where it will be securely stored. A record will be made of the incident and a letter will be sent to parents/carers to inform them and warn of the implications of a further breach of rules on mobile phones. The student will be able to collect the mobile phone at the end of the school day.
- On the occasion of a first confiscation, but where there are aggravating factors such as rudeness on the part of the student, the imposition of an additional sanction will be considered.
- On the second infringement, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to reception where it will be securely stored. Parents/carers will be informed of the situation and a request will be made that the phone is collected by a parent or carer.
- If the parent or carer fails to collect a mobile phone after a period of seven days, it will be returned to the student with a warning of the implications of a further breach of rules.
- On the third or subsequent infringement, the mobile phone would be confiscated by the teacher and taken to reception, where it would be securely stored. Parents/carers will be notified and an after school detention will be imposed. The student's repeated infringements will be discussed with the parent and a decision will be made by the school whether or not to withdraw the agreement to allow the student to bring the phone into school.
- For repeated offences, students may be required to hand in their phone at the beginning of the day and collect it at the end of the day for various periods of time.
- Any infringement which involves the disruption of learning or teaching may also result in an after-school detention, at the discretion of the teacher.
- Serious breaches in conduct, particularly involving bullying, will be dealt with by a member of the pastoral team or another suitable senior member of staff. In such cases, parents/carers will always be notified. The sanctions for more serious incidents will vary and will depend on the circumstances, the offence, and the degree to which trust has been breached.
- The Headteacher or a designated staff member will have the right to view files stored on confiscated mobile phones and will seek the cooperation of parents in deleting any files which are in breach of these guidelines, unless these are being preserved as evidence. The involvement of the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be considered at this point.

- If required, evidence of the offence will be preserved. Victims will be encouraged to keep screenshots for this purpose.
- Refusal to comply with the sanctions included in this policy will be treated as refusal to follow instructions and may result in a fixed term exclusion.

8. Support for the Victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another student or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This should be discussed with the victim's family or, where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support should be obtained.

To support the rehabilitation of a victim, the following support may be offered:

- Follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident.
- Other avenues to support the victim, such as Childline or the school counsellor will be suggested.
- The school will ensure that the perpetrator, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on their victim.
- The school will ensure a fully documented case history of the incident is recorded and appropriate notes are placed on perpetrator's files.
- Where material has been posted online about a victim, the school will provide support in getting material removed, either through discussion with the poster of the material or contact with the service provider.

9. Trips and Visits

- This policy remains extant on trips and visits.
- There may be occasions when staff members allow students to use their mobile phones on trips to, for instance, contact home if their return time changes.
- Students must be briefed about the rules prior to any trip and the details must also be communicated to parents via a letter or parents' meeting as appropriate.

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