



Kings Langley School

Unlocking Potential for Life

Mobile Phone Policy

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RATIONALE

The implementation of our mobile phone policy will not cause any problems for the vast majority of Kings Langley students who use their mobile phones sensibly within the boundaries of this policy. For clarity, the school considers other devices such as smart watches, audio equipment and tablets as being covered by all aspects of this policy.

As a school we believe that students should be able to “switch off” from the digital world and in order to achieve this we are clear about the boundaries within which mobile devices should be used during the school day. As a school we continue to want students to have mobile devices on their person but we ask students to switch off from them once on school site. This process of switching off from these devices will ensure students can focus on their studies without distraction and improve other types of communication and socialising within the school setting.

This policy exists to provide a framework for supporting our stated aim of “ensuring the happiness of every individual in our community”, to promote a climate which enables all students to flourish, regardless of ability or special needs, and supports our desired outcomes of developing "strong character". We want students to develop an understanding of the digital world within our PSHE programme and through this we will ensure students develop good digital hygiene strategies to use in their life.

PURPOSE

- To clarify for staff, students, and parents/carers that the inappropriate use of mobile phones in school or during school supervised activities can be damaging to the aims of our community and the well-being of members of that community.
- To provide precise information and clarity regarding acceptable use of mobile phones.
- To provide clear information as to the nature and imposition of appropriate sanctions, with due consideration to our behaviour and code of conduct policies.
- To foster an environment within which individuals can flourish without fear or menace.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

This school is founded on a set of fundamental values designed to enable all students and adults connected with our community to flourish and succeed, regardless of background or circumstances. We are determined to be open to people, places, methods and ideas and as such, equality and diversity are at the heart of everything we do. Our continued dedication to social justice and equality of opportunity is embodied in everything we do.

AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

We are creating an inclusive school community where:

- People are treated with dignity and respect
- Inequalities are challenged
- We anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances so that everyone can achieve their potential
- We value diversity and we recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength.
- We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; gender or gender



identity; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, caste, nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.

- We recognise that patterns of under achievement at any level and differences in outcomes can be challenged through positive intervention activities designed to bridge gaps.
- We respect the rights of individuals, including the right to hold different views and beliefs. We will not allow these differences to be manifested in a way that is hostile or degrading to others.
- We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, students, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

This policy, which is in line with Government guidelines to restrict the use of mobile phones in schools, has become necessary because we, in common with schools throughout Britain, have occasionally experienced problems caused by the inappropriate use of mobile phones and students unable to switch off from their device during the school day which ultimately interrupts learning episodes. This usually means that a text or a call distracts students' attention from their studies but it can include much more serious issues.

After considering evidence from a range of sources (including government publications), visiting high performing schools and following discussions with senior colleagues and governors, we have decided to take a very firm stand on issues associated with inappropriate use of mobile phones in our school.

The school is evangelistic about its moral structure and core values and we believe that we have a duty to draw clear boundaries that everyone understands. Within these clear boundaries students will then be able to self-regulate around the use of mobile devices. This role extends to include helping all students to understand the social and moral issues associated with the use of new technologies.

Mobile Phone technology has seen unprecedented advances in recent years and it is apparent that many students have access to "smart phones and smart watches" with immense capacity. Generally, problems associated with the inappropriate use of mobile phones fall into four categories: –

- Image Capture – students take and then circulate inappropriate images of students or members of staff using a variety of social media, including Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. These images are often taken or shared without an individual's consent and without their knowledge. Circulation of such images can be designed to intimidate, denigrate or embarrass individuals. Similarly, students can access unacceptable images from the internet, including pornographic or violent images, and then "send them" on to others.
- Bullying and intimidation – mobile phone technology can be used to send images, text and videos with ease and unfortunately, some students use this capability to intimidate or bully other children. Such behaviour is clearly unacceptable and would be dealt with through the school's behaviour and code of conduct procedures. "Sexting" and the sending of sexualised images would also be included in this category 1.
- Using a mobile phone in class – including texting to friends or family, receiving calls or accessing social media sites in order to contact others. Such misuse of a mobile phone can be very distracting and disruptive for both the individual and others in the class.
- Inappropriate contact with parents or others – this usually occurs after an "incident". A student might contact home complaining about an incident or event in school, without seeking the school's permission and this can then trigger a sequence of upset and trauma which the school can do little to control.



1 Staff should never attempt to view images where there is any evidence or suspicion that they are of an inappropriate or sexualised nature. In such cases, the student should be asked to turn off the phone and the phone then handed to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who would almost certainly refer the matter to the police.

SCHOOL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media sites can be of considerable benefit and the school actively promotes such access via its properly controlled subject twitter accounts or other recommended sites which are deemed educationally and socially beneficial. Unfortunately, unregulated access to social media frequently leads to individuals placing themselves in vulnerable or dangerous situations or can result in the on-line intimidation or "bullying" of individuals or groups of people.

It is also apparent that individuals accessing a range of inappropriate or dangerous sites place themselves at risk of radicalisation or emotional and psychological damage which can be long term.

At the extreme end there are a number of aspects of law that may apply to the misuse of mobile phones and other digital devices. In the most serious cases there may be a crime involved – for example, an incident being filmed might be an assault or breach of the peace. The misuse of phones might be an offence under the Communications Act 2003, if it involves a message that is grossly offensive or is of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. As a school we ensure students are prepared for these through a well-planned and bespoke curriculum to ensure students develop both self-regulation and also good digital hygiene.

CHALLENGES FOR SCHOOLS

New technological developments combined with the ever-changing world that our young people are growing up in present new and unprecedented challenges for schools.

Our mobile phone policy aims to deal with these problems by banning the use of mobile phones on the school site without the explicit approval of a senior member of staff due to a safeguarding matter. If they are brought into school they should be switched off and kept out of sight. They should be kept in bags, lockers or internal pockets (they must not be stored in the external blazer breast pocket). We are not preventing students from carrying mobile phones but wish them to be used outside of school time to ensure we create a focused learning environment at Kings Langley School. Students are not permitted to listen to music or access other media during the school day.

It is expected that all staff will adhere to our code of conduct concerning the use of mobile phones and only use their phones when in private unless in exceptional circumstances for work purposes. Similarly, sixth former students are restricted to using their phones only in designated areas of the school and during certain times of the day, although they are not expected to use them in plain sight of younger students before school or at break and lunch periods.

If parents have an emergency and need to contact their child, then they should do this via the normal school channels. They should not attempt to contact their child using their mobile phone. In certain circumstances which the school agree students will be able to come to their pastoral leaders to contact home via their mobile device.



GUIDELINES

On balance, we discourage students from bringing mobile phones to school. However, we accept that some students and parents see possession of mobile phones as an aid to personal security and safety and consequently, mobile phones are not banned but asked to be switch off and out of sight once on school grounds.

Where a student does bring a mobile phone to school, the phone must remain switched off during the school day, be kept out of sight and may not be used on school grounds. During approved off-site activities (such as sports fixtures or educational trips) the decision on the use of mobile phones will be made with the trip leader in consultation with the School Manager. Mobile phones can be switched back on at 3.15 outside of the school building. At this point earphones should not be in use so enable staff to communicate with the students about traffic or potential hazards.

The school will not accept liability for the safe keeping of a mobile phone which will remain the responsibility of the student at all times. As is normal practice with all valuables, students might want to hand in their mobile phones for safe keeping when in the P.E. area. Only in exceptional circumstances (usually involving other breaches of our code of conduct) would the school investigate the theft or loss of a mobile phone.

As is the case with all examples of unacceptable behaviour, inappropriate use of a mobile phone will lead to the application of proportionate sanctions, including temporary confiscation. All breaches of good conduct are considered on an individual basis taking into account the nature of the offence, its context and the prior behaviour history of the student concerned. The Headteacher or other members of the senior team will retain discretion in the application of sanctions depending on the nature of the individual situation considered. The procedures section below outlines responses to many common situations of inappropriate use of mobile phones but is not an exhaustive list.

In the case of Sixth Form students we view them as adults and will be clear to them where and when they can use mobile phones within the school setting.

PROCEDURES

In all cases where a phone is confiscated a Red Card will be issued by the teacher who confiscates the phone.

Common Situations and Questions	Response – including sanctions
A student is caught in possession of a phone (that is, it is in view)	The teacher will confiscate the phone and hand it to the school office where the student can collect it at the end of the day. The teacher will inform the relevant Pastoral Leader who will contact parents and the student will have to hand their phone in to the Pastoral Leader the following day before registration. They can collect the phone at the end of the day.
A student's phone rings during a lesson or he/she receives notification of a message	The teacher will confiscate the phone and hand it to the school office where the student can collect it at the end of the day. The teacher will inform the relevant Pastoral Leader who will contact parents and the student will have to hand their phone in to the Pastoral Leader the



	following day before registration. They can collect the phone at the end of the day.
A student uses a phone (to speak, text or access social media) inside a school building without permission.	The teacher will confiscate the phone and hand it to the school office where the student can collect it at the end of the day. The teacher will inform the relevant Pastoral Leader who will contact parents and the student will have to hand their phone in to the Pastoral Leader the following day before registration. They can collect the phone at the end of the day. This will continue for 5 days.
Without authorisation, a student uses the phone to communicate with a parent or other person in response to an incident at school	<p>Typically, this might involve a call to a parent to complain about an incident in school. This is wholly unacceptable as it circumvents the school's clear procedures for dealing with any behaviour or other incident in school. It would often mean that the parent is contacted by an upset child and provided with a distorted or inappropriate interpretation of what has transpired – sometimes leading to an angry or misinformed response from the parent. Similarly, it is not permitted that students telephone home to inform parents that they are unwell and need to be collected from school.</p> <p>The phone will be confiscated (as above) and can be collected by the parent at the end of school. A letter will be sent home and the student will be placed on a 1 hour detention after school. In addition, the student will have to hand their phone to their pastoral leader every day for a minimum of 4 weeks but this may be longer at the discretion of the Headteacher.</p>
Inappropriate messages are sent during school hours or activities (including messages of a threatening or bullying nature)	The context and nature of the messages sent will be crucial in determining the severity of the response. For example, if the messaging is repeated behaviour or part of a wider bullying campaign, the level of sanctions will be much higher than for a "one off" occurrence and are likely to include internal or external suspension (refer to anti bullying and behaviour policies). However, as above, parents will be invited to school to discuss ways of preventing similar unacceptable behaviour in the future. The student will hand their phone to their Pastoral Leader every day for a minimum of 4 weeks but this may be longer at the discretion of the Headteacher.



<p>A student records images of a fight or other altercation between students. Similarly, images of students are recorded without permission with the intention of causing ridicule or intimidation.</p>	<p>The student will face a fixed term suspension of up to five days and parents will be asked to attend school to discuss methods of preventing further misuse and to collect the phone following confiscation. The student will hand their phone to their pastoral leader every day for a minimum of 6 weeks but this may be longer at the discretion of the Headteacher. Should it be discovered that the student has posted such images/video clips on the internet (for example, via YouTube or Facebook) or has transferred them to other devices they would face a longer suspension and under some circumstances, permanent exclusion. For example, investigations show the action to be malicious and/or part of a wider bullying or intimidation campaign or the behaviour has been repeated.</p>
<p>A student records an unauthorised picture or video clip of a teacher or other member of staff.</p>	<p>The student will face a fixed term suspension of up to five days and parents will be asked to attend school to discuss methods of preventing further misuse and to collect the phone following confiscation. The student will hand their phone in every day to their pastoral leader for a minimum of 6 weeks but this may be longer at the discretion of the Headteacher. Should it be discovered that the student has posted such images/video clips on the internet (for example, via You Tube or Facebook) or has transferred them to other devices or media they would face a longer suspension and under some circumstances, permanent exclusion. For example, the action was investigated and considered to be repeated or malicious or that such images/clips were damaging to the good reputation or professional standing of the individual teacher and/or Kings Langley School. It should be noted that the member of staff concerned might take further independent action, perhaps following consultation with their professional association.</p>