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2024/2025

Mobile Phone Policy

Building foundations and providing opportunities to create confident, aspirational, and independent members of our community.

Approved by Governing Body on:	8/10/2024
Signed by Chair of Governors:	<i>P. A. Evans</i>
Head Teacher:	O M Flowers
Lead Personnel:	O M Flowers
Date of Review:	8/10/2027

1. Introduction and aims

At **The Westminster School** we recognise that mobile phones and similar devices, including smartphones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents/carers and staff, as well as the wider school community.

Our policy aims to:

- Promote safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents/carers, visitors 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 phones in school, such as:

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

Note: throughout this policy, 'mobile phones' refers to mobile phones and similar devices.

2. Relevant guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Department for Education's non-statutory [mobile phone guidance](#) and [behaviour guidance](#). Further guidance that should be considered alongside this policy is [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Staff

All staff (including teachers, support staff and supply staff) are responsible for consistently 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 every **3** years, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

Staff will address any questions or concerns from parents/carers quickly, and clearly communicate the reasons for prohibiting the use of mobile phones.

3.2 Governors

Governors are responsible for monitoring and reviewing this policy every 3 years and in light of changes to policy and legislation.

4. Use of mobile phones by staff

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that staff should not use their own mobile phone for personal reasons in front of pupils throughout the school day. Staff have access to iPads, Laptops and work allocated mobile phones for the purposes of communication for work-related reasons.

4.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to use their personal mobile phone during contact time. Use of personal mobile phones must be restricted to non-contact time, and to areas of the school where pupils are not present (such as the staffroom).

There may be circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time for personal reasons. For instance (this list is non-exhaustive):

- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school
- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members
- For monitoring of blood sugar levels link to diabetes

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.

4.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information, including entering such data into generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as chatbots (e.g. ChatGPT and Google Gemini).

Further information relating to data protection can be found in the [School's Data Protection Policy](#) and [Staff Professional Code of Conduct](#).

4.3 Safeguarding

Staff must not give their personal contact details to parents/carers or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps. This is to protect members of staff and ensure communication occurs through official channels via email or through the school's main switchboard.

Staff must avoid publicising their contact details on any social media platform or website, to avoid unwanted contact by parents/carers or pupils.

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil. If it's necessary to take photos or recordings as part of a lesson/school trip/activity, this must be done using school equipment.

4.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for staff to use personal mobile phones for work. Such circumstances may include, but aren't limited to:

- To use multi-factor authentication
- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits

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In these circumstances, staff will:

- Use their mobile phones in an appropriate and professional manner, in line with our staff code of conduct
- Not use their phones to take photographs or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil
- Refrain from using their phones to contact parents/carers. If necessary, contact must be made via school landline phones or through Microsoft Teams.

4.5 Work phones

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 must:

- Only use phone functions for work purposes, including making/receiving calls, sending/receiving emails or other communications, or using the internet
- Ensure that communication or conduct linked to the device is appropriate and professional at all times, in line with our staff code of conduct.

4.6 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action. See the school's staff disciplinary policy for more information.

5. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. The Westminster School agrees with these principles as we agree that they create significant challenges when used within school. The school is an environment where students deserve to learn without distraction and mobile phones can impact on their ability to engage and communicate effectively with their peers.

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

Although the school accepts that some students may need their mobile phones in the following circumstances:

- To travel independently to and from school.
- To self-regulate when traveling in on minibuses or individual taxis.

The overarching principles in relation to mobile phones are as follows:

- Pupils keeping mobile phones in a secure location, such their bags or on their person. When in school they need to be switched off at all times.
- Pupils keeping their mobile phones with them, on the condition they are never used, seen or heard
- If students are unable to self-regulate based on these principles the school expects they will hand them into their Form Tutor at the start of the day during registration time.

5.1 Use of smartwatches by pupils

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The DfE's [non-statutory mobile phone guidance](#) includes in the term 'mobile phones' all devices with communications and smart technology that the school chooses to include in their policy.

Smartwatches are wristwatches with smart technology in them. They can be used to tell the time, send and receive text and voice messages, make calls and listen to music. Some smart watches have wellness and health-related features.

- Smartwatches are able to be worn however they are to be used to tell the time and not used to connect with their mobile phone for the purposes of communication.

5.3 Sanctions

If students breach any of the principles outlined within this policy the following process will be imposed:

- The school will confiscate devices from pupils. This is permitted under [sections 91 and 94](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- When confiscated they will be turned off and stored securely by the school reception. They will be placed in an envelope clearly marked with the name of the student. Confiscation of phones is permitted according to the [DfE's guidance on mobile phones in schools](#)
- A member of the Westies Pastoral Team, Form Tutor or Senior Leader will make contact with parents and carers and inform them of a breach of the policy.
- They will be returned at the end of the school day.
- The breach of the policy will be logged on the schools electronic behaviour system.

Failure to follow the principle in this policy according to sanctions will instigate the following action:

- Withdrawal from the learning activity and environment
- An immediate phone call to parents and carers to request support with compliance.
- Failing to resolve this matter with support of parents and carers will result in a fixed term exclusion and will need to return home.
- An exclusion meeting will then be conducted the following day with a member of the Westies Pastoral Team, Form Tutor or Senior Leader.

5.4 Power to Search

The school reserves the right to search pupils' phones in specific circumstances, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#). The DfE guidance permits the school to search a pupil's phone if there is a good reason to do so (such as having reason to believe the phone contains pornographic images, or if it is being/has been used to commit an offence or cause harm to another person).

The following examples are not exhaustive but may include:

- The pupil's behaviour may indicate they may be suffering, or at risk of, harm. If this is suspected, staff will follow the appropriate procedure set out in Part 1 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- If part of a wider Safeguarding or Behavioral investigation.

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.

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Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexting (consensual and non-consensual sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos)
- Upskirting
- 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

6. Use of mobile phones by parents/carers, volunteers and visitors

Parents/carers, 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 pupils
- Not using phones in lessons, or when working with pupils

Parents/carers, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at reception or attend a public event at school.

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

- Use their phone to make contact with other parents/carers
- Take photos or recordings of pupils, their work, or anything else which could identify a pupil

Parents/carers or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils using their phones, as set out in section 5 above, but must refer any sanctions to a member of staff, as they do not have the power to search or confiscate devices.

Parents/carers 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 their personal mobile during the school day.

7. Loss, theft or damage

If you allow pupils to bring phones to school, parents and carers take responsibility and liability for the loss or damage of the device when on school site or residential trip.

Parents need to be confident that when pupils bring mobile phones to school that pupils are aware of this policy, be able to follow the rules and are able to sensibly and responsibly keep them safe and secure.

Pupils must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. Staff must also secure their personal phones, as well as any work phone provided to them. Failure by staff to do so could result in data breaches.

All schools continue with:

The school accepts no responsibility for mobile phones that are lost, damaged or stolen on school premises or transport, during school visits or trips, or while pupils are travelling to and from school.

Pupils and parents/carers are aware of the disclaimer above through the issue of the school policy and through the school newsletters

Confiscated phones will be stored in the **school reception** in **secure location clearly labelled**.

Schools that confiscate phones from pupils become responsible for the phone at the point of handing it in. A condition check will be made of the mobile phone and any damaged will be recorded on the envelope.

All schools continue with:

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

8. Monitoring and review

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

- Feedback from parents/carers and pupils
- Feedback from staff
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority and any other relevant organisations

If there are any concerns regarding this policy, these should be brought to the attention of Mr O Flowers, Headteacher in a timely manner.

9. Appendix 1: **[Code of conduct]** for pupils allowed to bring their phones to school due to exceptional circumstances

[Code of conduct]

The DfE's non-statutory mobile phone guidance says that pupils should not use mobile phones throughout the school day. The Westminster School agrees with these principles as we agree that they create significant challenges when used within school. The school is an environment where students deserve to learn without distraction and mobile phones can impact on their ability to engage and communicate effectively with their peers.

Pupils should not use their mobile phones during the school day, including during lessons, in the time between lessons, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes.

Although the school accepts that some students may need their mobile phones in the following circumstances:

- To travel independently to and from school.
- To self-regulate when traveling in on minibuses or individual taxis.

The overarching principles in relation to mobile phones are as follows:

- Pupils keeping mobile phones in a secure location, such their bags or on their person. When in school they need to be switched off at all times.
- Pupils keeping their mobile phones with them, on the condition they are never used, seen or heard
- If students are unable to self-regulate based on these principles the school expects they will hand them into their Form Tutor at the start of the day during registration time.

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

1. You may not use your mobile phone during lessons.
2. Phones must be switched off (not just put on 'silent').
3. You may not use your mobile phone in the toilets or changing rooms. This is to protect the privacy and welfare of other pupils.
4. You cannot take photos or recordings (either video or audio) of school staff or other pupils under any circumstances.
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 password(s) or access code(s) with anyone else.
7. Don't use your mobile phone to bully, intimidate or harass anyone. This includes bullying, harassing or intimidating pupils or staff via:
 - a. Email
 - b. Text/messaging app
 - c. Social media
8. Don't use your phone to send or receive anything that may be criminal. For instance, by 'sexting'.
9. Rules on bullying, harassment and intimidation apply to how you use your mobile phone 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. Don't use your phone to view or share pornography or other harmful content.

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12. You must comply with a request by a member of staff to switch off, or hand over, a phone. Refusal to comply is a breach of the school's behaviour policy and will be dealt with accordingly.
13. Mobile phones are not permitted in any internal or external exam or test environment. If you have a mobile phone, you will be asked to store it appropriately, or turn it over to an exam invigilator, before entering the test room. Bringing a phone into the test room can result in your exam being declared invalid.

10. Appendix 3: Template mobile phone information for visitors

This has been included on the Visitors Leaflet.

Use of Mobile Phones and Similar Devices in our School

Please keep your mobile phone on silent/vibrate whilst on the School grounds.

Please do not use phones where pupils are present. If you must use your phone, you may go to the staff room.

Do not take photos or recordings of pupils under any circumstances.

Do not use your phone in lessons, or when working with pupils.

The School accepts no responsibility for phones that are lost, damaged or stolen while you are on the school grounds.

A full copy of our mobile phone policy is available from our website.