Mobile phone policy

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DRAFT

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims 2
2. Roles and responsibilities 2
3. Use of mobile phones by staff 2
4. Use of mobile phones by pupils 3
5. Use of mobile phones by parents, volunteers and visitors 5
6. Loss, theft or damage 5
7. Monitoring and review 5

1. Introduction and aims

At Bilton School we recognise that mobile phones, including smart phones, are an important part of everyday life for our pupils, parents and staff, as well as the wider school community. We have also recognised more recently that mobile phones in school are having a negative impact on students' learning. In May 2025, the school signed up to the 'Smartphone Free Childhood' pact which recognises the detrimental effect that Smartphone use is likely to be having on our youngest students. Smartphone Free Childhood
Our policy aims to:

- Promote, and set an example for, safe and responsible phone use
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for pupils, staff, parents and volunteers
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to safeguarding children and young people and behaviour

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

- Risks to child protection, safety and well-being
- 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, in liaison with the Deputy Headteacher Behaviour, are responsible for monitoring the policy every year, reviewing it, and holding staff and pupils accountable for its implementation.

2.2 Governors

Will review this policy in accordance with the review of the school's overall behaviour policy on an annual basis.

3. Use of mobile phones by staff

3.1 Personal mobile phones

Staff (including volunteers, contractors and anyone else otherwise engaged by the school) are not permitted to make or receive calls, or send texts, while children are present or during contact time in lessons. 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 staff room).
There may be exceptional circumstances in which it's appropriate for a member of staff to have use of their phone during contact time. For instance:

- Needing to use MFA for work (for example to log into CPOMS or school network)
- For emergency contact by their child, or their child's school

- In the case of acutely ill dependents or family members

The headteacher will decide on a case-by-basis whether to allow for special arrangements.
If special arrangements are not deemed necessary, school staff can use the school office number 01788 540600 as a point of emergency contact.

3.2 Data protection

Staff must not use their personal mobile phones to process personal data, or any other confidential school information. Detailed guidance on data protection can be found in the school's Data Protection Policy. Personal mobile phones are used to enable multi-factor authentication when logging into the school network and staff are regularly asked to do so using the Microsoft MFA App.

3.3 Safeguarding

As referenced in the school's Safeguarding Policy:

Staff must refrain from giving their personal contact details to parents or pupils, including connecting through social media and messaging apps.

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

Staff should avoid using their 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 where possible. If personal devices are used for recording events, the images must be deleted as soon as possible once transferred to the school system. Staff should seek advice from the school's GDPR champion or senior staff if unsure.

3.4 Using personal mobiles for work purposes

The school has bookable mobile phones for use on trips or school events. These should be booked in advance. 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:

- Emergency evacuations
- Supervising off-site trips
- Supervising residential visits
- Emergency contact with external agencies (such as the police or social care) or other similar circumstance

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. If necessary, contact must be made via the school office

3.5 Sanctions

Staff that fail to adhere to this policy may face disciplinary action.

4. Use of mobile phones by pupils

The school acknowledges that mobile phones are an intrinsic part of modern life and there are many ways in which phones may support the education of its students. Indeed there are many apps and websites promoted by school which students can safely use at home or off the school premises. Many students at Bilton High School live a significant distance away from the school and most travel to and from school on school buses or public transport. Mobile phones will NOT be required for any lessons. All recommended learning platforms and apps can be used on a tablet or other device.

The school allows students to bring mobile phones on site in order to that contact can be made to and from parents/ carers during the journeys to and from school. Some of our students are young carers and therefore a vital contact for dependents at home. A small number of students may require a phone to monitor health conditions such as diabetes.

Mobile phones should not be seen or heard anywhere on the school site during the school day until *3.05pm* and students have left site.

In Years 7-10 students are required to place their phones switched off into mobile phone pouches which are locked as children enter the site. Students can unlock their pouches as they leave site and are not permitted to use their phones before they have left the school gates. Year 11 must have their phones in their bags or in the inside pocket of their blazers. They are not permitted in trouser pockets, waistbands of skirts or in coats.

In general:

- Years 7-10: Students can bring mobile phones on site in their pouches but they must be turned off prior to being placed into the pouch.
- Year 11: Mobile phones cannot be seen or heard on any part of site, including the school playgrounds and fields, throughout the school day. They will only be permitted after 3.05pm once students have left the school site. They must be kept in inside blazer pocket or in their bag.
- For years 12-13: Mobile phones cannot be seen or heard across the school site, including the school playgrounds and fields and are only permitted to be used in the sixth form common room or designated study areas.

Mobile phones MAY be used in these circumstances:

- In KS5 curriculum lessons where an agreement has been made about the use of a particular app has been agreed by the school. Parents will be informed of this at the start of a course or as relevant.
- Medical exemptions apply and alternative medical pouches will be available for students who require these. The school will need to be notified of the exemption.

Students can make calls in an emergency using a landline phone either in reception or the pastoral leaders offices.

4.1 Sanctions

If a student is seen using a mobile phone; has a phone in their hand or is visible on their person or the sound of a phone is discernible by a member of staff:

1. **The phone will be confiscated immediately** by the member of staff alerted to its use (Schools are permitted to confiscate phones from pupils under sections 91 and 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
2. **The member of staff will ask the student to turn the phone off and hand it to them**. It will be handed into reception where it will be logged and put in a plastic wallet. This will then be placed in the school safe.
3. For a first offence, the phone will be confiscated for 24 hours.
4. For a further offence within a school half term, the phone will be kept for 48 hours before being collected by the parent at the end of the school day. If this happens on a Friday, the phone will be returned to the student and then confiscated for 24 hours on the Monday.
5. Persistent offences will be considered as serious breaches of the school behaviour policy and could result in students having to hand in a phone every day. Students and parents will need to agree to the student submitting their phone to a secure store which will retain the phone until the end of each day.
6. Refusal to hand in a mobile phone will be taken very seriously as a breach of the behaviour policy and will result in an internal exclusion (minimum) and parents will be contacted immediately. Staff will report the defiance immediately to a senior member of staff on duty and the matter will be followed up as soon as possible.
7. Refusal to go to internal exclusion will result in suspension from school. The phone will still be

subject to a 24 hour confiscation and parental collection upon the students return to school.

8. Where phones are confiscated a message will be sent to parents notifying them of this and students will be lent a 'dumb' phone with parent/guardian numbers in the phone.

Certain types of behaviours, 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.
Such conduct includes, but is not limited to:

9. Sexting or constructing of fake imagery or nudity; accessing pornography or distributing images
10. Threats of violence or assault or online bullying
11. Abusive calls, emails, social media posts or texts directed at someone on the basis of someone's ethnicity, religious beliefs or sexual orientation

Under the DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation, staff at Biton School have the power to search pupils' mobile phones. At Bilton School, this search will normally be carried out by senior staff or members of the pastoral and welfare teams. If there is reason to believe a phone contains pornographic images, or is being used to commit an offence or cause personal injury it will be searched. Should there be any such material, the phone will be confiscated and parents/carers asked to come and collect or discuss the nature of the content or the device handed to the police for further examination.

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:

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

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

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

Parents or volunteers supervising trips are also responsible for enforcing the school's policy for pupils 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 unless explicitly requested to by a member of senior staff or the attendance/ welfare officer at the school.**

6. Loss, theft or damage

Students bringing phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled, and are stored securely when not in use.

Pupils must secure their 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.

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.
Confiscated phones will be stored in the school safe.

Lost phones should be returned to the reception. 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 of pupils' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, the school will take into account:

17. Feedback from parents and pupils
18. Feedback from teachers
19. Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
20. Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the local authority or other relevant organisations