



Mobile Phone Policy

Riverbank Academy

September 2020

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Reviewed by: David Lisowski (Headteacher)

Agreed by governors:

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This Policy applies to mobile phones and any other electronic device brought into school.

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Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

As a research engaged school we are continuously acting upon proven evidence to ensure that the learning environment we create for our students is as productive as possible. A number of studies have been published relating to the impact of mobile phones on student learning. It is quite staggering to see the evidence that even having a mobile phone switched to silent and in a pocket has a detrimental effect on a child's education.

Mobile phones in schools present a number of challenges, including:

- Interrupting lessons and disrupting the learning of others
- Possible theft and loss
- Requirements from public examination boards regarding mobile phones in examination rooms
- The ever-increasing sophistication of mobile phone technology, which increases the possibilities of inappropriate use, particularly with regards to video and photographic capabilities
- The impact on students mental health
- The negative impact of social media and cyberbullying

Aims

Our policy aims to:

- Promote a safe and productive learning environment
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for students, staff, parents and guests
- Support the school's other policies, especially those related to child protection and behaviour

Role and Responsibilities

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 is responsible for monitoring the policy each year, reviewing it, and holding staff and students accountable for its implementation.

Guidelines for Students

1. Mobile phones **must** remain switched off during school hours. This includes break and lunchtimes. Mobile phones are not to be seen or heard on school site – this is defined as ‘the entrance doors at Student Reception and there on’.
2. Any student seen using their mobile phone whilst on the school site will have their phone confiscated.
3. This includes the use of ‘Smart’ or Apple watches – the use of these devices is not allowed as they are effectively mobile phones and will be treated as such.
4. Confiscated phones must be taken to Headteachers’s PA’s office where the mobile phone will be secured in a locked room.
5. After the first confiscation, students will be allowed to collect their phone at the end of the school day from Headteachers’s PA’s. Parents will be notified of the confiscation via E mail or phone.
6. If confiscated a second time, parents are required to collect the mobile phone from Headteachers’s PA’s and this will be the expectation for subsequent confiscations.
7. If a student’s mobile phone is confiscated more than 3 times during a half-term, parents will be requested to attend a meeting to resolve the issue.
8. When a phone is confiscated, parents need to be aware that there may be a time delay before the phone is able to be collected.
9. Travel trained students should also be mindful of traffic and dangerous situations if using their mobile phone when walking to and from school.
10. Students will receive sessions explaining the mobile phone policy and the policy will be placed on the school website for parents to access.
11. When issues with mobile phones exist that involve serious misuse of the phone, transmitting images, cyber bullying etc.; parents will be brought into school and the Malicious Communications Act will be explained to them. This states that parents are responsible for the phone and any issues resulting from the phone when it is used by a ‘minor’.

Guidelines for Post 16

It is recognised that Post 16 students should have some privileges regarding the use of mobile phones in school. It is essential that they model the responsible use of such devices to their younger peers. The following represents the behaviours expected of Post 16 students:

1. Mobile phones can be used in the Post 16 lunchtime clubs. .
2. When in lessons, Post 16 students will be directed by staff as to when and how they can use their mobile phone, this will only be for learning tasks.
3. Post 16 students using their mobile phone (other than in the identified areas) on school site will have it confiscated.

Sanctions for Students

- Students who use their mobile phone in school will have their phone confiscated.
- Students who use their mobile phone in school and refuse to hand it over to a member of staff will be given a lunchtime detention.
- Students who refuse to hand over their mobile phone will be supervised by their pastoral lead and parents contacted. If a student then decides to hand over their mobile phone, they will be allowed to return to lessons.

Guidelines for Staff

See MAT Code of Conduct policy.

Use of mobile phones by parents, visitors and volunteers

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:

- Not taking pictures or recordings of students, unless it is a public event (such as a school fayre), or of their own child.
- Using any photographs or recordings for personal use, and not posting on social media without consent
- Not using phones in lessons, walking around the school site or when working with students
- Parents, visitors and volunteers will be informed of the rules for mobile phone use when they sign in at Main Reception. 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, 02476 453121. They must not try to contact their child on his/her personal mobile during the school day.

Loss, Theft or Damage

Students bringing mobile phones to school must ensure that phones are appropriately labelled, and are stored securely when not in use. Students must secure their mobile phones as much as possible, including using passwords or pin codes to protect access to the phone's functions. 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 students are travelling to and from school.

Monitoring and Review

Riverbank Academy is committed to ensuring that this policy has a positive impact on our students' education, behaviour and welfare. When reviewing the policy, we will take into account:

- Feedback from parents and students
- Feedback from teachers
- Records of behaviour and safeguarding incidents
- Relevant advice from the Department for Education, the Local Authority or other relevant organisations

Appendix 1: Guidance on Confiscation

DfE guide on 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation 2018'. Current law highlights:

"Schools' general power to discipline, as circumscribed by Section 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables a member of staff to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so".

See below for full document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Appendix 2: Legal Context

Common offences related to the misuse of mobile phones. The key to the offence below is that the message/picture/video is actually **SENT** (If it is only stored on a device the offence is not complete).

Malicious Communications Act 1988

It is an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it should cause them distress or anxiety.

Appendix 3: Sources of Help

Resources are available to support teachers, parents and students to promote the safe use of mobile phones and other technologies both in school and at home. Below is a note of some resources that are available and a short description of what each one contains. These resources have been drawn from a variety of sources:

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/primary/health-and-development/does-your-child-need-a-mobile-phone/> Contains advice for parents of younger students who may be asking for a mobile phone

<https://twitter.com/edutopia/status/1131540783100645377> Evidence of research of the impact of mobile phones on student learning

<https://www.innerdrive.co.uk/mobile-phone-addiction/> Research and advice on mobile phone addiction