



Holmer Green Senior School

Mobile Phone Policy

March 2024

Introduction

The term 'device' denotes mobiles phones, iPads and other tablets, Smart Watches (including Apple Watches), MP3/MP4 players, headphones (both wired and wireless; including air pods), and any similar portable electronic devices.

This Policy is designed to ensure that potential issues involving mobile devices have been clearly identified and addressed to ensure that they do not interfere with learning, or make students less safe.

This responsible use policy applies to the use of mobile phones on the school site and at extra-curricular activities. The "Trips policy" outlines the use of these on all school trips/visits.

It is the responsibility of students, parents and carers that where mobile devices are brought onto school site, they abide by this Policy. The decision to provide such a device to a child is that of the parent or carers and it is therefore incumbent upon the parent or carer to understand the capabilities and potential use/mis-use of those capabilities.

The school's preference is for students to not bring devices to school as they have a detrimental impact on academic performance.

Rationale for Policy

We recognise that mobile phones and other digital devices are now an integral part of our culture and can be of considerable value, particularly in relation to personal safety.

However, balanced with this is the need to safeguard children and staff from cyber bullying, inappropriate use of the Internet and telecommunications, and the misuse of social media such as TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram.

As well as the safeguarding issue the rationale for this is that it has been shown that the effect of banning mobile phones from school premises adds up to the equivalent of an extra week's schooling over a student's academic year. This is according to research by Louis-Philippe Beland and Richard Murphy, published by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics. "Ill Communication: The Impact of Mobile Phones on Student Performance" found that after schools banned mobile phones, the test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4% or is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year".

Mobile phones are not to be seen or heard at any time on the school site

1. This includes before or after the school day has started if a student has arrived early or had to stay late.
2. HGSS expects that mobile devices will be switched off/power shut down (data, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi should all be disabled) and kept in bags or blazer when on the school site and not in trouser pockets.
3. Devices must not be used to make calls, send messages, access the internet, take photos/videos or use any other application whilst on the school site. The exception to this is where a member of staff has given that student permission (this will be in very rare circumstances).

Sanctions for mobile phone use

If a phone is seen or heard on the school site, the following will happen

- The phone is confiscated for three school days
- The phone will be placed in the school safe for collection by the student at the end of the third **school** day (this excludes weekends). If the phone is confiscated on a:
 - Monday – it can be collected on Wednesday PM
 - Tuesday – it can be collected on Thursday PM
 - Wednesday - it can be collected on Friday PM
 - Thursday - it can be collected on Monday PM
 - Friday - it can be collected on Tuesday PM
- A behaviour point will be issued on Satchel to inform the parents

If the above happens on more than three occasions subsequent confiscations will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy for persistent disruptive behaviour.

Any refusal to hand a phone over to members of staff will result in a sanction for defiance as this would constitute the refusal of a reasonable request by a member of staff.

Communication with Home

The school recognises that parents and carers feel the need for their children to have access to a mobile phone for communication with home. This helps with safeguarding and child protection especially in the long dark winter months. We support this wholeheartedly.

We have therefore adopted the following Mobile Phone Policy best use guidance:

- Students are allowed to bring mobile phones to and from school to ensure their personal safety at all times
- Students will need to turn off the phone when they walk on to the school site. They can turn it back on when they leave the site
- If a parent/carer needs to contact a student or a student to contact their parent/carer, this can be done through the school Reception

Inappropriate Conduct and Use of Mobile Devices

1. Students with mobile devices may not engage in personal attacks, harass another person, or post private information about another person. This includes using messages, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone/Smartwatch calls. If the use of technology humiliates, embarrasses or causes offence it is unacceptable regardless of whether 'consent' was given. Students using devices to bully other students face sanctions in line with our Behaviour and Anti-bullying Policy. It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use an emergent technology device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Police.
2. Students cannot victimise another student and use their device to take videos and pictures of acts to denigrate and humiliate that student and then send the pictures to other students or upload it to a website or social media for public viewing. This also includes using devices to photograph or film any student or member of staff without their consent. In the event that this happens the student will delete those images immediately and be given a suitable sanction. It is a criminal offence to use a device to menace, harass or offend another person and almost all calls, text messages and emails can be traced by the Police. Where it is necessary, the school will refer these incidents to the Police.
3. Any student who uses vulgar, derogatory, or obscene language whilst using a device will be given an appropriate sanction.
4. Students must ensure that files stored on their emergent technology devices do not contain violent, degrading, racist or pornographic images. The transmission of such images is a criminal offence. Similarly, 'sexting' – which is the sending of personal sexual imagery – is also a criminal offence. School will hand all such evidence to the Police.
5. At HGSS we are fully aware that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. Under the Malicious Communication Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and know or believed to be false by the sender. If school feels an offence may have been committed by a student in this way the school will seek guidance from the Police as to the next course of action.

Responsibility for Loss and Disclaimer

We understand why parents/carers may want their child to bring a mobile phone into school, particularly if living in a rural area or travelling some distance to school. Whilst this is understood, the school retains no liability for any phone that is brought into school which is either lost, stolen or damaged or used in a manner which is against the owner's consent. The school's advice is to leave mobiles at home and use the system of contact through the Reception. If, however you have purchased a locker and your child's phone is deposited in that locker for the day the responsibility for that phone rests with you and the locker company.

This Policy has been produced using guidance under Section 2 of the 2011 Education Act which sets out new provisions about mobile phone/Smartwatch and other electronic devices.

For Clarity

- Students should not be seen with their mobile phone, and if they have one it is expected that the phone is in their bag or blazer pocket
- Phones must be off (power shut down), not on 'silent' or 'vibrate'
- There are a number of clocks in school, students do not need to use their phone to check the time, or students can use a wrist watch
- Headphones are treated in the same way as mobile phones and confiscated if seen
- Students cannot access their phones on school site at any time. This includes before the school day has started whilst they are within the school grounds
- The same expectations apply for Sixth Form, except phones can be used in the Sixth Form Study Room at any time and the coffee lounge during free periods, break and lunchtime

Approved by Governors: March 2024

To be reviewed: March 2026