UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School

# Mobile Phone Policy

FEBRUARY 2025

# University of Birmingham School
# Mobile Phone Policy

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| **Governing Committee Responsible** | Pastoral | **Next Due** | February 2028 |
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| **Staff Responsible** | Colin Townsend | | |

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At University of Birmingham School we refer to **Pupils** (who are in Years 7-11 and aged 11-16) and
**Students** (who are in Years 12/13 and aged 17-18)

## 1 Rationale

1.1 Mobile phones are now a feature of daily life, as are headphones, air pods, ear pods and smart watches. For the purposes of clarity, headphones, air pods and ear pods are subject to the same rules as mobile phones outlined below. If smart watches are used for communication purposes, the procedures followed will be in line with this policy.

1.2 The University of Birmingham School recognises there are potential positives for the use of mobile phone technology (e.g. internet access, cameras to capture work, video and sound recording) to enhance learning both inside and outside the classroom.

1.3 The School also recognises the wishes of a number of parents/carer(s) for pupils/students to carry a mobile phone to assist with safer journeys to and from School – and often in the context of travelling a greater distance across the city than might be found elsewhere.

1.4 In the Lower School (Years 7-11), we believe it is important for pupils to have a break from mobile devices during the School day to focus engagement, enable a learning environment which fosters curiosity and critical thinking, and supports pupils' mental health and wellbeing. By removing mobile phone use during the School day, our pupils can spend more time staying active and socialising face-to-face with their peers, fostering healthy relationships and good habits away from screen-time and technology.

1.5 This policy sits alongside the School's Behaviour and Exclusion Policy, as well as our guidance on teaching online safety within the curriculum, coupled with delivering high quality relationships, sex and health education, which includes instruction on the use of technology in a safe way to prevent online harms.

1.6 The School's stance on mobile phone use has been guided by the Online Safety Act 2023: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/50 and the 'Mobile Phones in Schools' non-statutory guidance (Department for Education) published in February 2024: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cf5f2a4239310011b7b916/Mobile_phones_in_Schools_guidance.pdf.

1.7 To balance creation of a strong and supportive learning culture, alongside safeguarding and communication practicalities, and with exception to some operational flexibility for those in the Sixth Form (see Section 3), the University of Birmingham School considers itself 'a phones away School' so with reference to DfE Guidance mobile phones are not routinely used, seen, or heard.

## 2 Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy - in Years 7-11

2.1 It is the University of Birmingham School's policy to allow pupils to have a mobile phone with them in School, should families choose to do so, under the conditions outlined below:

a) Phones must not be used for any purpose (e.g. phoning, texting, using the internet, taking photos, checking the time, taking videos) between the hours of 8.50am and 3.45pm (or whilst offsite during these times) unless pupils are given specific permission to do so by a member of staff.

b) Any pupil bringing a mobile phone or any other form of mobile technology on to the School premises must have a signed Home-School agreement on file in School which indicates agreement with this policy and the Acceptable Use Policy.

c) Phones must always be placed on silent mode, or switched off and kept out of view unless pupils are given specific permission to use the phone by a member of staff.

d) If a phone is heard, the pupil will be reminded to place it on silent mode, ensure it is out view and not used. If these instructions are not followed, the phone will be confiscated by the teacher or Pastoral Manager and a sanction will be issued. The phone will be returned to the pupil at the end of the School day.

e) If a phone is seen by staff or used by the pupil in any way, it will be confiscated by the teacher or Pastoral Manager who will subsequently administer a sanction. The phone will be returned to the pupil at the end of the School day.

f) In the event of the pupil refusing to hand over their phone, they will receive an escalated sanction in line with School policy for failing to follow reasonable instructions. With additional staff support, the phone will be confiscated and returned to the pupil at the end of the School day. Further escalations to sanctions may apply where necessary.

g) Where we see repeated phone misuse in School we will expect the pupil to hand their phone into their Pastoral Manager, or another identified member of staff, before 08:50am daily, for a fixed period of time, as determined by a senior member of staff. This measure will be put in place to remove distractions and enable the pupil to be fully present and engaged in their learning. Escalated sanctions may also apply in line with School policy.

h) Phones and other electronic devices (i.e. smart watches) must never be taken into examinations – in line with national Joint Council for Qualifications Regulations:
'*Mobile phones, electronic communication or storage devices such as iPods, MP3/4 players, reading pens, wrist watches that have storage devices and any other products with text or digital facilities are not permitted*.'

i) In circumstances should they arise where a pupil is on a fixed-term period of internal isolation for matters in line with School policy, the pupil in question is expected to hand any mobile phone to the Pastoral Manager for safekeeping. The mobile phone will be returned at the end of the period of internal isolation. Internal isolation sometimes occurs whilst a behaviour incident is being managed or investigated, and phone removal on such occasions strengthens independent fact-finding where appropriate, and where the temptation for communication may be heightened.

## 3 Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Policy - in Sixth Form

a) Students are allowed to use mobile phones and other electronic devices during Study Periods, for work purposes only. Where a student is seen to be misusing their phone or other electronic device, they will be sanctioned and may have the device confiscated. If confiscated, it will be returned at the end of the School day.

b) Students must not take photos or videos at any time during the School day unless they are given permission to do so by a teacher (ie. such as to take a photo of the whiteboard during a lesson).

c) During lessons, students must ensure their phone is on silent and is not seen or being used, unless permission has been granted by a teacher.

d) Phones, headphones, ear pods and similar electronic devices must not be used or worn when walking around the School site. We ask that, as members of a School Sixth Form, our post-16 learners contribute to upholding the School's broad-approach to mobile phones, by modelling the expectations and behaviours of 'a phones away School' to younger pupils and peers.

e) During break and lunch time students are able to use their phone in the Sixth Form Centre and the Atrium only.

f) For Sixth Form, floor 1 and floor 2 of the main School building will be a 'no phone zone' to support the use of phones only in designated spaces, and for permitted purposes.

g) Phones and other electronic devices (i.e. smart watches) must never be taken into examinations – in line with national Joint Council for Qualifications Regulations:
*'Mobile phones, electronic communication or storage devices such as iPods, MP3/4 players, reading pens, wrist watches that have storage devices and any other products with text or digital facilities are not permitted.'*

## 4 Emergency communication

4.1 If a pupil or student needs to contact their parent/carer(s) they will be allowed to use a School phone – and should approach a member of staff at Main Reception or in the Sixth Form Centre.

4.2 If a parent/carer(s) needs to contact their child urgently they should phone the School Reception (0121 796 5000) and a message will be relayed to their child in a timely way.

## 5 Security for mobile phones and other valuables

5.1 The School cannot accept any responsibility for theft, loss, damage or health effects (potential or actual) relating to mobile devices, nor for theft, loss or damage to any other valuable item, nor for the theft or loss of any money.

5.2 It is the responsibility of parent(s)/carer(s) and pupils/students to ensure mobile phones and other valuables are used with care and responsibility, and that they are insured.

5.3 In relation to educational trips or visits which occur beyond the School site, pupils and students have the option to hand their phone into the Main Office prior to leaving or to a member of staff going on the trip to secure their valuables. If a pupil or student chooses not to do this, they are responsible for their device and acknowledge point 5.1. If they do hand in their phone, the details outlined within point 5.1 still stand.